LANDSCAPES PAST PERFECT

D.C.M. Raemaekers (ed.)

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(In)capable of modifying the natural environment?

On the interpretational biography of Mesolithic fire events

Hester K. Kamstra

Introduction

As archaeologists, we are interested in the nature of social relations of past peoples, whether they are between humans themselves, between people and animals or between people and their environment. It is the latter that is of relevance to the current paper. There is no single interpretation, however, of the relation between people and their surroundings that is commonly accepted and universally used. Theoretical developments in archaeology do have a direct influence on the interpretation of a single phenomenon. Whereas the use-history of objects has been termed a *cultural biography*, the history of archaeological readings of single phenomena might be called an *interpretational biography*. Here, the interpretational biography of the concept of fire events in the Mesolithic will be considered as a result of changes in theoretical preferences. It is apparent that our perception of hunter-gatherers and their relation to the environment is linked to different research traditions that emphasize either the role of people or the agency of their surroundings. This is all the more reflected in artistic impressions of the Mesolithic, which might show people navigating the unforgiving 'wilderness' or, in contrast, people actively creating open spaces for habitation (fig. 1).

This paper addresses the following: first, the chronological developments concerning the theoretical foundation and the interpretation of the *Mesolithic* are considered, as well as its use in archaeology. Next, it is asked which opinions exist in regards to the occurrence and cause of fire events in the Mesolithic of Northwestern Europe. Following this, we will explore how reliable the evidence for anthropogenic environmental manipulation through the use of fire actually is, since it underlies a continuing debate. Apart from the nature of the evidence, there are theoretical issues that fuel the dispute, which will be discussed through the relation between research traditions and theoretical interpretations. Finally, some suggestions will be made as to how to proceed in the study of early prehistoric man-environment interactions.

On the history of the Mesolithic

While research into the "Stone Age" has been elementary for early archaeological practice (Czarnik 1976, 59), the internal articulation of this age consisted of only two periods at first: the Palaeolithic and the Neolithic, defined on the basis of differences in technology and subsistence base (op. cit. 60). This stark division subsequently led to the idea of the existence of a 'hiatus in human existence' between the Palaeolithic and the Neolithic. It was at the end of the nineteenth century that J. Allen Brown first argued for continuity in the prehistory of man, thus suggesting an 'intermediate' phase between the already existing periods. He adopted the term *Mesolithic* to account for this intermediate stage (loc. cit.). The Mesolithic was here seen as a time of cultural stagnation, devolution and decay (Spikins 2008, 2; Price 1987, 227).

It is important to realize that the concept of a Mesolithic period was both *residual* in nature as well as *negatively* defined. Whereas both the Palaeolithic and the Neolithic were (positively) defined by clear characteristics, the Mesolithic was defined by its failure to fit in an already existing model of prehistory (Czarnik 1976, 61; Spikins 2008, 4). From the original definition onwards, however, various archaeologists have tried to define the middle stone age in terms of positive occurrences, thus making it possible to trace theoretical developments within the definition of the Mesolithic.

In the late nineteenth century, early theories on hunter-gatherers focussing on the relationship between humans and their environment were directly related to ideas about 'stages of civilization'. People and cultures on the lower end of these stages were thought to be determined by their environment, for they lacked the capabilities to actively transform their surroundings (Coughlan 2014, 706; Spikins 2008, 2). Only a few decades later Gordon Childe (1925, 1) described Mesolithic societies as being gripped by a 'state of helpless barbarism', an opinion underlined in the 1950's by Grahame Clark in his final publication of the Star Carr excavations (1954; Spikins 2008, 4). The idea of post-Pleistocene adaptation to new environmental conditions was made most explicit by Lewis Binford and Karl Butzer, both belonging to the school of New Archaeology (Meier 2012, 505; Trigger 1989). They attributed the cultural changes visible in the Mesolithic to the climatic change of the postglacial period, although Butzer (1971, 528-533) has acknowledged that too great an emphasis has

Fig. 1. Two artist impressions of Mesolithic communities at Star Carr, showing people 'passively' navigating and actively opening up the landscape (from Andrews 2013, fig. 1 (top) and Sorrell 1951, fig. 1 (left).

been placed on these changes to mark a new cultural epoch. Although new scientific methods (such as pollen analysis and dating methods) allowed for a well-established foundation of evidence, environmental determinism is still heavily engrained in the ideas of (ecological and economical) adaptation.

The most recent trend in Mesolithic studies concerns an approach founded in post-modernism that parallels similar ideas already adapted in Neolithic and Bronze Age archaeology. Its main focus is to be critically reflexive of Western conventional thinking and to bridge the gap between past people and contemporary Western archaeology (Cannon 2015, 95). Approaches taken by researchers vary from being explicitly phenomenological (Cobb 2009) to focussing on past perception and agency (Spikins 2008). In a series of three (reactionary) articles, Thomas (1988, 1991) and Mithen (1991) explore a more direct critique of archaeological theory, in which the rationality with which Mithen identifies seemingly 'emotional' states in Mesolithic foragers is seen by Thomas as symptomatic of late capitalist thought; the addition of emotion to an ecologically deterministic frame of interpretation does not change the underlying rationalistic assumptions (Thomas 1991, 16). Instead of attacking an archaeological paradigm, Thomas critiques the very foundations of this approach as well as the reasons for adapting it: "The imperative behind such a view of humanity is easy to comprehend: it makes people easy to model mathematically." (Thomas 1991, 16) Similarly, Haila (1997, 136) sees the commonly used ideas of 'otherness' and 'nature' as being closely related in the subject-object dichotomy that is recurrent in modern Western thought. This dichotomy translates to Mesolithic research in the passive or active roles that are attached to hunter-gatherers and their environment.

Since research into the Mesolithic on the one hand and the Neolithic on the other has developed

at different speeds and intensities, the theoretical backgrounds underlying each of these periods differ significantly from each other. Whereas the emergence of the Mesolithic is thought to be linked to environmental changes and thus is written about in environmental and biological terms (Butzer 1971, 535), the Neolithic has mainly been related to cultural innovations and social change. As a result, the impact of Mesolithic peoples on their environment has traditionally been seen as low, whereas Neolithic people are considered to be capable to actively modify their environment (Bishop et al. 2015, 51; Warren 2005, 69). As seen in the distinction between Mesolithic hunter-gatherers and Neolithic farmer-hunter-gatherers, it is common to question whether these communities were indeed subject to very different socio-economic pressures and processes (Brown 1997, 139). As Richard Bradley famously wrote in 1984: "[...] *in the literature as a whole, successful farmers have social relations with one another, while hunter-gatherers have ecological relations with hazelnuts.*"

However, as we have seen earlier, recent developments in Mesolithic studies have moved towards a more post-processual approach similar to that of Neolithic research (Cannon 2015, 95). Still, our view of the Mesolithic remains ingrained in concepts of environment and nature, both ecologically and ideologically, but attempts have been made to create a more social narrative (Spikins 2008, 5; Davies et al. 2005). Czarnik (1976, 59) in fact already argued quite early on in the development of Mesolithic studies that the concept of a Mesolithic had outlived its original usefulness and was in fact hindering theoretical advance, because of the growing amount of new data and the new developments in scientific discourse. One case study that is especially suitable for evaluating and highlighting the various conceptual characteristics of the Mesolithic, is that of environmental research - more specifically, the interpretations of fire events in the Mesolithic period. Not only are we dealing with a growing amount of scientific (ecological) data of increasingly high resolution, but the interpretation of these data shows a divide among scholars that cannot solely be the data itself. Instead, ideas about hunter-gatherers as subjects or objects, actively influencing or passively experiencing their environment, seem to be underlying the discussion, thus pointing towards a more theoretically laden cause of division.

Pollen diagrams, forest fires and hunter-gatherer impact

Within Mesolithic studies there has been a long-standing emphasis on environmental research, especially in relation to the impact of hunter-gatherers on their environment (Butzer 1971). Ample reconstructions of local vegetation have been made on the basis of pollen diagrams, to aid in the search for evidence of human modification of nature. We will now focus on the disputed interpretation of one phenomenon that has been present in several of these pollen diagrams: the sudden decline of arboreal species in combination with micro- and macroscopic charcoal particles, pointing to the presence of *fire*.

Archaeologists from Britain have shared the view that the burning of vegetation has a primarily anthropogenic cause; an idea that results from the fact that evidence of Mesolithic activity in this region is often found close to evidence for burning. As a result, natural causes of fire are hardly considered (Grant et al. 2014, 175). Moreover, it is assumed that the Holocene woodland in Britain is not flammable and that the occurrence of natural combustion (for instance in the form of lightning) is too sparse (loc. cit.). Continental archaeologists have traditionally been more reserved in attributing anthropological causes to fire events (Moore 2000, 135; Marlon et al. 2013), favouring natural causes above a substantial role of hunter-gatherers in landscape construction. While the theoretical division between British and Continental archaeologists has largely ceased to exist, there continues to be a debate between researchers that tend to ascribe evidence of fire to natural causes and those that seek to prove an anthropogenic origin for these phenomena. First, the nature of the evidence will be considered, after which both sides of the debate will be reflected on.

The nature of the evidence

To aid the goal of prehistoric vegetation reconstruction, soil samples for both palynological and charred particle analysis are taken, though the number and size of the samples tends to differ. Significant (human) disturbance of vegetation is mainly recognized by the abrupt decline and rise of arboreal species in the pollen diagram. The restoration of earlier declined woodland pollen frequencies is typically seen as the end of human influence on an area (Moore 2000, 126). Species which are associated with the opening up of the landscape are pine (*Pinus*), birch (*Betula*), oak (*Quercus*) and alder (*Alnus*) (Innes & Blackford 2002, 191; Hörnberg et al. 2006, 21). Once the pollen diagrams have been made and interpreted in terms of abrupt 'events', microscopic charred particles are counted according to their size. However, there is no standard for the division of certain size categories. In comparing the occurrence of charcoal and arboreal pollen, the goal is to identify points of correlation that make it possible to link the fire events to the decline of tree species (Hörnberg et al. 2006, 21; Moore 2000, 126).

Table 1. *Reasons for Mesolithic woodland burning (from Mason 2000, Table 1)*

Reasons for burning	*Subsistence activities affected*
To improve productivity and nutritional quality of forage for animals, and thereby to increase populations	Hunting
Via vegetation regrowth to attract animals to restricted and known areas at a given time	Hunting
To improve visibility of animals and to reduce their escape cover	Hunting
To facilitate mobility of human populations	Various
To improve or synchronise yields of human plant-food resources	Gathering

Anthropogenic origin

For an extensive overview of the hypotheses regarding traditional (hunter-gatherer) fire-use and landscape modification, see Coughlan (2015). The term *fire ecology* will be used here to denote the burning of vegetation in order to create open patches in the vegetation for non-agricultural reasons (Woelders et al. 2016, 187). This type of vegetation management has often been linked to Mesolithic practices (Woelders et al. 2016, 187; Simmons 1975, 7). There are several hypotheses as to the benefits of using fire to manipulate a wooded environment (tab. 1). The burning of dense (forested) vegetation might have been to increase the production of economically significant plant species, the focus mainly being on hazelnut (*Corylus avellana* L.) and possibly acorn (*Quercus* L.) (Smith 1970; Huntley, 1993; Simmons 1996, 139-141; Woelders et al. 2016, 187; Bishop et al. 2015, 52; Mason 2000, 140; Warren et al. 2014, 639). Another reason suggested for the deliberate opening up of woodlands by hunter-gatherers, is to attract wild animals and to reduce their chances of escape (Bishop et al. 2015, 52; Mason 2000, 140; Rowley-Conwy & Layton 2011, 849; Warren et al. 2014, 638; Bos et al. 2006, 39). The presence of fire ecologies is also known from ethnographic research among native communities in North America (Mason 2000, 142; Smith 2011; Russell 1983; Moore 2000, 131) and East Asia (Mason 2000, 144).

Natural origin

While fire may indeed be ignited by humans, there are possible natural causes of fire occurrence as well. Lightning is a phenomenon that can cause natural combustion in areas of dry vegetation. Associated with the impact of a lightning strike, are the climatic conditions present at the moment of the fire event. Warm periods followed by cold, dry climatic conditions and fast climate change create the ideal circumstances for forest fires, especially in species prone to catching fire such as pine (*Pinus*) (Moore 2000, 132; Crombé 2016, 311). Moreover, soil characteristics, topography and natural disturbances such as wind throws can have a direct impact on the local vegetation and thus on the possibility of fire ignition (Kuosmanen et al. 2016, 696). One of the main reasons for the interpretation of fires as having natural causes, is the absence of associated archaeological evidence (Woelders et al. 2016, 187). Without signs of human presence in the landscape, it is reasonable to attach a natural cause to fire events.

Underlying the ongoing debate are a number of problems concerning both the nature of the evidence as well as its interpretation within a wider archaeological framework. Eight issues will be considered in more detail below. First of all the number of samples taken for pollen research at an archaeological site is often very small. Secondly, the volume of the samples used is often small as well, making it difficult to distinguish between local and more regional patterns of vegetation. Thirdly, when multiple corings are actually done, they are often located far from each other, causing any reconstruction of larger areas of vegetational history to be nearly impossible. A fourth problem that concerns the interpretation of the fire events itself, is that it is hard to determine the scale and duration of the burning of the local environment. An important distinction between, for instance, a cooking pit and the burning of vegetation, is therefore not straightforward to make (Hörnberg et al. 2006). A fifth cause of concern related to the interpretation of data concerns the size of the microscopic charcoal particles in pollen samples (Woelders et al. 2016, 186). While particle counts of various sizes (<100, <125, <200 μm) are used as a proxy for local fire activity, it turns out to be hard to distinguish between local and regional fire signals from these counted frequencies (loc. cit.). Moreover, an observable increase in fire activity does not always equate to an increase in human activity, for (natural) wildfire occurrence, changing climatic conditions and varying vegetation types play an equally important role (Woelders et al. 2016, 187; Warren et al. 2014, 638). A seventh cause of criticism is the use of ethnographic parallels to proof the presence of prehistoric man-induced fires (Hodder 1982). Finally and maybe most importantly, there seems to be no way to definitively distinguish between anthropogenic burning

and wildfire (Warren et al. 2014, 639; Marlon et al. 2013, 7; Moore 2000, 133). While fire history can be identified through microscopic charcoal within pollen sequences, differentiating between natural and anthropogenic causes of fire remains a challenge. It appears that the eight problems addressed above are the result of differences in theoretical perspectives. While some difficulties are methodological in nature, most problems are related to the value attached to ecological data as well as the acknowledgement of Mesolithic people as being capable of modifying their environment. What, however, is the exact nature of these theoretical disagreements?

Discussion

'Shades of environmental determinism'. In Britain, ideas about the ecological context of Mesolithic hunter-gatherers changed during the last decades from a view in which human influence had very little lasting impact on the environment, to a view that sees Mesolithic land-use as indeed having a very significant impact on the vegetation (Innes & Blackford 2002, 185). On the Continent, researchers suggest a smaller scale of influence, but the view that Mesolithic people lived passively within the framework of their environment has been rejected (Bush 1988, 459; Simmons & Innes 1986, 397). In fact, it seems to be the case that to suggest a primarily climatic and natural origin for Mesolithic forest fires would result in a negative label of 'environmental determinism' (Moore 2000, 132; Walsh 2008; see also Thomas 1988, 1991; Mithen 1991). The negative connotations associated with a focus on natural circumstances are the result of the views of post-processual archaeology. Within this theoretical framework, the concept of human *agency* is an important one (Van de Noort & O'Sullivan 2006), mainly because post-processual archaeologists argue that it is exactly this idea of human intentionality that is lacking in the earlier school of New Archaeology (Dornan 2000). Agency is in this case viewed as the capacity of a being to act intentionally, a view first made explicit by Anthony Giddens (Dornan 2002, 308). Even pollen evidence itself (in the form of abrupt changes in pollen frequencies) are used to infer human - conscious - agency. Underlying this interpretation is a theory of intentional and planned alteration of the environment through the manipulation of vegetation (Brown 1997, 134; Walsh 2008). An important consequence of acknowledging the intentional manipulation of the environment by Mesolithic man is that the process of Neolithisation would have taken place in a cultural setting that was already familiar with the human alteration of vegetation (Tolksdorf et al. 2013, 2822). As a result, Mesolithic and Neolithic people might not have differed greatly in terms of their (technological) capabilities.

Just as humans have agency, nature and the environment can be thought to have agency as well. Both concepts are part of the human landscape and are dynamic, thus actively influencing human behaviour (Van de Noort & O'Sullivan 2006). Some even argue for an archaeology or anthropology that treats all agents in a network, including the natural ones, in a symmetric fashion (Walsh 2008, 551; Jones & Cloke 2008). Environmental elements that can be considered non-human agents in the current case study are the various types of vegetation, the geological profile of the environment as well as the unpredictability of weather conditions. While earlier problems regarding the interpretation of early prehistoric environmental manipulation and fire ecology were indeed related to ideas about hunter-gatherers, their environment and intentional behaviour, at the moment the continuation of the debate seems to be caused more by the nature of the evidence (which is hardly ever conclusive). There have been relatively few instances where the large-scale environmental modification adhered to by British researchers could actually be inferred from archaeological sites (Bush 1988, 459). High-resolution studies are needed to recognize the smallest of changes in vegetation or occupation phases, so it is increasingly difficult to assess large-scale effects of human activity on the environment (Bos et al. 2006, 27). Smaller-scale influence, however, might still be recognized.

Since the debate is so heavily coloured by theoretical discussion, a possible solution to the interpretational problem has to be sought within archaeological theory. One possible area of criticism is the influence of Western (Enlightenment) thought on archaeological theory. Problematic concepts within this framework of thought are the abundance of dichotomies like subject-object and culture-nature, the tendency to work with those dualisms as to define an 'otherness' (Haila 1997, 136; Boric 2005, 16) and the value attached to 'objective' data supposedly generated by the natural sciences. The stark appreciation of 'scientific' results in archaeology is the result of its supposedly straightforward data, seemingly uninfluenced by theory and interpretation. This admiration of the natural sciences has not faded with the appearance of a post-processual archaeology (Marciniak & Raczkowski 2001; McGovern et al. 1995). However, the role of biological research such as pollen analysis in archaeology is far more theory-laden than is acknowledged by its advocates. To simply add another scientific method upon pollen analysis (as done by for instance Innes & Blackford (2002) in the form of fungal spore analysis) does not eliminate the underlying theoretical assumption that ecological research can tell us something about

human activity in the past. Fortunately, the problems surrounding archaeological palynology have been addressed on a few occasions (Bryant & Hall 1993; Edwards 1991), but when used as an argumentative tool, this critique is still hardly ever considered.

To return to the discussion between Thomas and Mithen (1988; 1991), it seems that to make changes relative to or within already existing theoretical frameworks are not effective, for they can hinder the possibility of future theoretical change by reinforcing prevailing ideas. Creating a more precise definition of the Mesolithic might therefore be of little use, since its underlying historical developments as described earlier will remain firmly in place and thus its theoretical difficulties as well. Hunter-gatherers will be ascribed either a passive role in relation to the environment, or they will be seen as active subjects within their surroundings. An alternative possibility is to abandon the traditional tripartite division of the Stone Age completely. Such an abandonment would be a very drastic development, since its terminology is so heavily engrained in publications about the Stone Age. An anecdote given by Dušan Borić (2005, 16) illustrates this clearly: "*Referring to the conventional labels Mesolithic and Neolithic, one of the editors of this book promised at a conference several years ago, 'I will try not to use M- and N-words'. He promised to buy a drink for anyone who spotted a slip of his tongue. He almost succeeded. Towards the end of his paper the habit of using the terms overwhelmed even his conscious decision to change the well-rooted vocabulary of prehistorians*." However, by going back to the archaeological material which constitutes the foundation of the Mesolithic concept in addition to letting go of the existing periodization, our research can again become focussed on the existing archaeological evidence. New research then might suffer less under the burden of historically accumulated theory.

Conclusions

In this paper the interpretational biography of the Mesolithic concept has been explored, in which the changing use and interpretation of the term 'Mesolithic' is characterized by a division between ecologically-focused and humanistic research. This divide has been illustrated through the case of the interpretation of pollen diagrams that point towards instances of fire. These fire events are either associated with natural causes, or with a view of extensive landscape modification by Mesolithic hunter-gatherers. As it turns out, both viewpoints are theoretically laden and it is the theoretical dispute that fails to be addressed. Not only should we shed more light on our theoretical backgrounds (possibly through renouncing the division of the Stone Age), but it is important to confront the ways in which we deal with ecological evidence, which is especially important in Mesolithic studies. To be critical of the nature of the evidence, in this case the interpretation of pollen diagrams, is to be critical of the theoretical nature of archaeology. The aim of this paper has not been to dismiss the use of pollen analysis, or any form of ecological analysis for that matter, but to make the reader aware of the fact that no research is immune to theoretical interpretation. Research problems that can be traced back to archaeological theory should therefore be approached from the theory itself, to prevent new evidence from being 'stained' by hindering theoretical backgrounds. Finally, the author would suggest others to become more willing to make explicit the theoretical assumptions behind their research. This would aid discussions about any archaeological period and might in the end bring us towards a better insight into the past.

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A landscape divided by thought?

Cosmology and landscape organisation in the Funnel Beaker Culture

Youp van den Beld

Introduction

In archaeological studies landscape can be viewed from many different theoretical perspectives. In the beginning of the 20th century the research was focussed on identifying culture areas and cultural change. New Archaeology changed the focus of research to the systematic properties of the landscape, resulting in many of the interpretations resting on ecofunctionalistic explanatory frameworks (Tilley 1994). The so-called post-processual reaction from the 1980's onwards put the emphasis on a human centred view of the landscape by focussing on symbolism and phenomenology (Hackwitz & Lindholm 2015, 146). These more recent approaches have brought new questions about experiencing the landscape and the significance of non-Western understandings of place, space and cosmology to the forefront (Scarre 2011, 12).

This paper addresses this last-mentioned topic and will focus on the questions how a cosmology can be related to the spatial organisation of the landscape and how it can be recognised within archaeology. The concept of cosmology will be elaborated upon in the first part of this paper. In the second part I will try to reconstruct the cosmological view on the landscape of the people from the Funnel Beaker Culture (FBC) from spatial patterns. Lastly this cosmological view will be used as an hypothesis for interpreting the recently discovered Funnel Beaker cemetery of Oosterdalfsen (Fig. 8).

The FBC was spread over a large part of the North-European plain, from the present-day Netherlands in the west to eastern Poland and from southern Scandinavia in the north to Bohemia and Moravia in the south (Midgley 2005, 35). The FBC is divided into several regional groups based on the ornamentation on pottery (Fig. 1). The Netherlands and north-western Germany belong to the West-group of the FBC (Wiersma & Raemaekers 2011, 32) which dates to the period 3400-2850 cal. BC (Brindley 1986, 93; Lanting, Van der Plicht 2000).

The cosmological perspective

A cosmology is a shared set of ideas about the form of the world and the laws to which reality abides. The ideas people have about the world around them and how it works will have an impact on how they act within their landscape. An example of a the spatial translation of cosmology is *feng shui* which has left its mark on the Chinese landscape in spatial terms through the selection of tomb locations. This selection seeks to bring the graves into the most harmonious position in relation to features of the natural environment (Haaland & Haaland 2011, 34). Another example of a cosmology that influenced spatial relations in the landscape can be found in the introduction of Christianity into England, which caused a drastic change in the landscape of death. In the 5th to 7th century Anglo-Saxon peoples would often bury their dead in cemeteries located around Bronze Age and Roman Age earthworks and monuments, creating a landscape of (fictional) ancestors. However with the rising popularity of Christianity it became more important to bury the dead on consecrated ground instead (Meyers Emery, 2015). Archaeologists can reconstruct past human behaviour and thoughts by looking at patterns in the material evidence of past activities. The way we interpret these patterns and reconstruct the ideas that formed their foundation is however not without its difficulties, especially when it concerns religious or ritual behaviour (Taylor, 2011, 90). To be able to interpret someone else's cosmological beliefs the archaeologist must first work interpretatively through the filters of their owns sociological position (Shanks & Tilley, 1992). The interpretation of prehistoric cosmological perspectives might benefit greatly from comparative ethnography. Comparative ethnography can draw special attention to possible restrictions on the variability of ritual landscape constructions found under different circumstances and might provide models for reflection on observed spatial patterns (Haaland & Haaland 2011, 27-34; see Haakanson & Jordan 2010 for an ethnographical example). As an example of cosmological research in archaeology, one might turn to the context of a human burial as a mortuary rite (Taylor 2011, 93). By looking at the way people have undertaken certain actions in the treatment of their dead, archaeologists may be able to recognise coherent cosmologies by which people have lived and died. The rituals performed may be common to a wide range of communally shared beliefs (*op. cit.* 89).

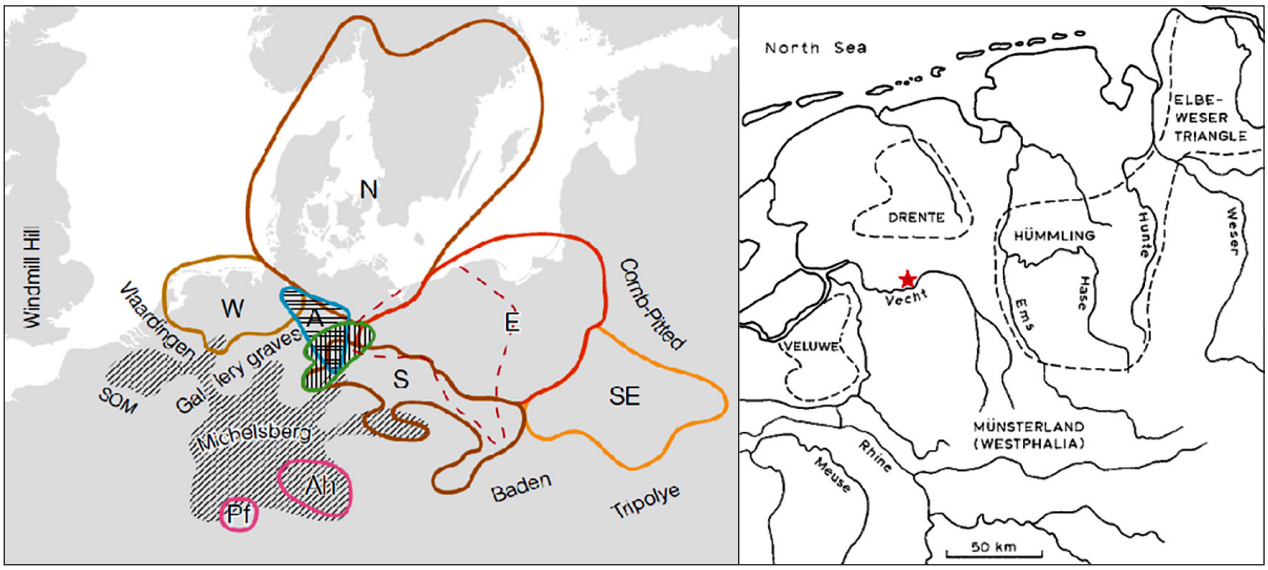

Fig. 1. Left: the different regional groups within the FBC, W= West-group, N= North-group (from Bakker 2010: figure 1). Right: location of the case study Oosterdalfsen indicated with a red star (after Voss 1982: figure 1).

In this paper I will view the landscape from the cosmological perspective. I shall refrain from using the term 'ritual perspective', which is often used, because I believe that a cosmology will have an impact on more than just the ritual aspects of life and landscape. The cosmological perspective can be understood as one that looks at landscape the way people view it as symbolic expressions of basic values and cosmological ideas (Barth 1975). According to Bateson (1973) the belief in these values and ideas is primarily promoted by means of non-verbal communication and in mythological and metaphorical forms of verbal communication. This way, features of the natural landscape can be taken as expressions of ideas and values in people's minds, existing as something independent of man, but at the same time given meaning as representing immaterial but meaningful dimensions of the human condition (Haaland & Haaland 2011, 25, but see also Rappaport 1979, 54). Natural features of the landscape can thus be seen as constructions of meanings but people may also seek to augment the significance of such symbolic meanings by expressing them in manmade constructions (Haaland & Haaland 2011, 25). In this paper I will look primarily at settlements and cemeteries in a larger landscape context to find out what kind of places were used for which activities. The selection of locations and the spatial relations between sites of a different nature will be considered as an expression of the basic values and cosmological ideas of the society that created these places.

One type of place is of particular interest in this research: the monument. The construction of a monument is a wholly cultural and ideological undertaking. Monuments can therefore offer extraordinary insights into belief systems of past societies. As monuments are closely associated with the social compliance of death and the sacred, they can be seen as an embodiment of cosmologies in durable form (Scarre 2011, 9). Monuments share key characteristics that make them excellent for inquiries into cosmology. Taking into account that they can also be seen as expressions of values and ideas it becomes very clear that their location and architecture as well as orientation, are never random and serve a clear purpose (Oswald et.al. 2001, 106). For instance, Bradley (2000, 104-106) has argued that monuments serve the purpose to change the experience of a location. Not only does the sheer size of a monument make it so that it can often be seen from a large distance, retaining a prominent position in the landscape, the enormity of the task of its construction calls for many people/communities to become very personally involved with the location. After its construction the monument itself can either facilitate or restrict vision or movement and form boundaries between different parts of the landscape (*op. cit.*). Thus, monuments can also be seen as a means of transformation in which going from one side of the monument to the other can have significant ritual meaning (Fowler & Cummings 2003). All of these characteristics can add an additional level of symbolism to the natural landscape (Bradley 2000, 107). Richards (1996) explains how humans have the tendency to order their world and how monuments can help to achieve this purpose. Just like the Chinese graves were located according to the principles of *feng shui*, monuments can be constructed in places to conform to the values and ideas of a society and help to maintain or create a cosmological order in the landscape.

A division in the landscape

The Funnel Beaker Culture has been the subject of many different types of investigations and is one of

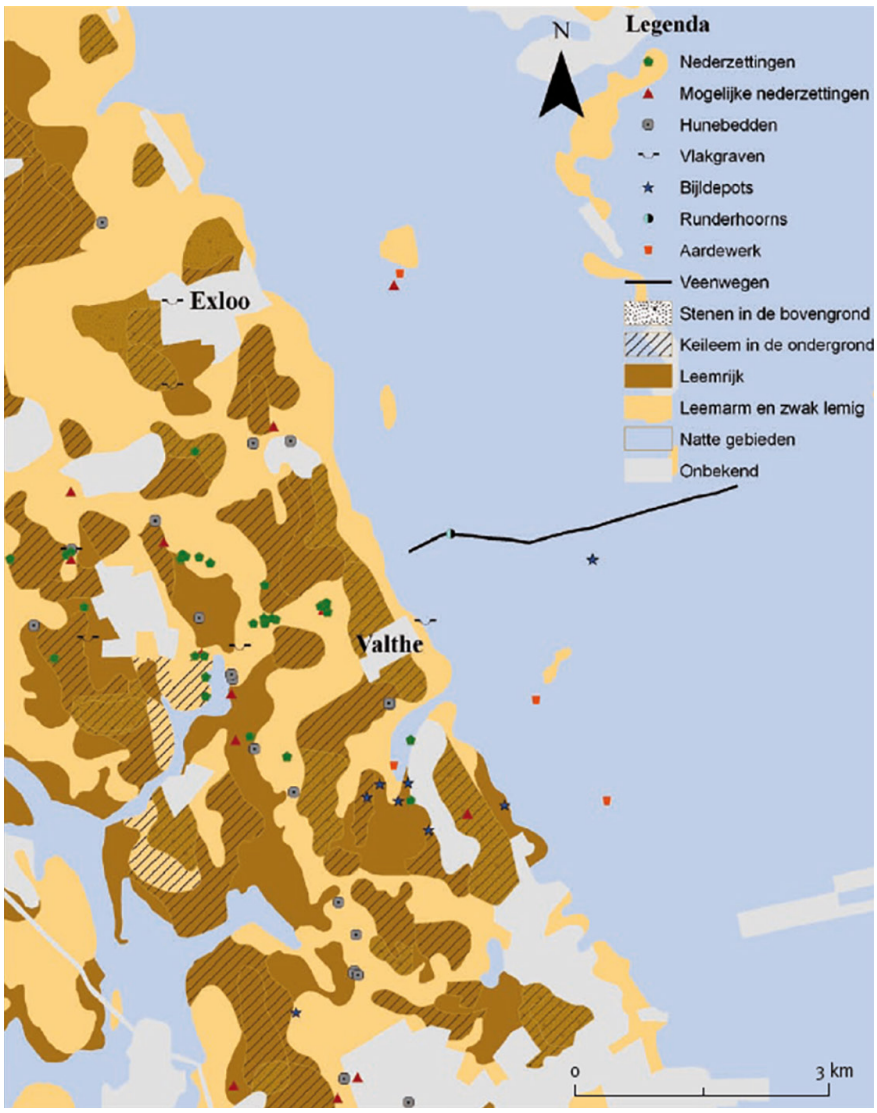

Fig. 2. A distribution map showing settlements (nederzettingen), megaliths (hunebedden) and ritual depositions (bijldepots, runderhoorns and aardewerk) on soils with a high percentage of loam (darker brown) and a low percentage of loam (light brown) on the Hondsrug near Valthe and Exloo (from Wiersma & Raemaekers 2011: figure 4).

the best-known Neolithic cultures (Midgley 2005, 34). Most of the academic attention has been given to the megalithic grave monuments. Several studies have applied a landscape approach towards these megaliths and have found interesting spatial relations between the megalith monuments and other types of sites. Four of these studies will be discussed below and will be used to formulate a hypothesis on the cosmology of the FBC and its influence on the landscape.

In the Netherlands most of the FBC sites have been found on the Hondsrug, a glacial flute in the province of Drenthe (see Fig. 1). Wiersma and Raemaekers (2011) carried out a spatial analysis on a part of the Hondsrug and were able to discover some of the controlling factors in landscape organisation during the FBC period that could be linked to a cosmological view (Fig. 2). Most of the FBC settlements have been found on higher dry and sandy soils with generally a low percentage of loam (*op. cit.* 37). The settlements have been built on these locations presumably because these soils are fertile and easier to cultivate than the soils rich in loam (Spek 2004, 129). Furthermore, it is assumed that the settlements were located close to the arable fields (Raemaekers 2012, 77). While the higher and drier places where used for living, the lower and wetter locations were used for ritual activities. The lower parts of the landscape of Drenthe were characterised by peat bogs. These peat bogs are not very suitable for living because they are not easily accessible and dangerous even, you could get lost or drown. With a regularly occurring shallow fog the peat bogs could also appear very mysterious (Van Vilsteren 2002, 22-23). This is probably why the peat bogs were extensively used for depositions of a ritual nature. Often not much is known about these depositions because most were found long ago during peat extractions and were not well documented (Wiersma & Raemaekers 2011, 34). As in Drenthe, bog depositions are known throughout the whole North-European plain, a tradition that may have had roots in Mesolithic beliefs (Midgley 2005, 42). The megalith graves take in a special position in the landscape of Drenthe. They are generally located on dry sandy soils and always close to places where big

boulders, their construction material, can be found. Most importantly, however, the monuments are located *in between* the higher landscape occupied by settlements and the lower landscape used for ritual depositions. Wiersma and Raemaekers (2011, 41) have interpreted the landscape as being built up from concentric circles with the settlements forming the centre, the megaliths forming the second ring, and the outer ring consisting of the landscape used for ritual depositions (Fig. 3). This construction essentially divides the land of the living from the land of the dead with the megaliths forming the border.

This division between the land of the living and the land of the dead does not seem to be exclusive for the FBC in Drenthe. Hackwitz and Lindholm (2015) have studied the spatial relations between megalithic graves and settlements belonging to the FBC in Karleby, Sweden, and found that here too the landscape is organised in such a way that areas associated with death are spatially separated from habitation areas. Another interesting observation is that the construction of the tombs on the plain seems to have mirrored the geological sequence of the mountain adjacent to the plateau, suggesting the tombs contain a strong reference to the surrounding landscape (*op. cit.* 148). Not only are the areas associated with death separated from the settlement areas, through viewshed analysis it was determined that the settlements and their immediate surroundings are also frequently not directly visible from the megalith structures (*op. cit. 152;* Fig. 4). Furthermore, Sjögren (2010) has observed that the distinction between mortuary landscapes and settlement areas is also apparent in other parts of Sweden, notably Falbygden (although the distinction is not as clear as in Karleby). According to Sjögren (2010, 12) the cosmological views of Neolithic people have been directly materialised in the construction of the megaliths and were also directly linked to the landscape. Sjögren concludes that in this case study cosmology is manifested by the distinct organisation of certain activities, to do with life and death, with certain landscape qualities. In these cases the landscape does not only function as a context for these activities but exists as a fundamental feature or even a medium for these activities (*loc. cit.*). In my opinion this applies to Drenthe as well.

These case studies show important insights into how the people from the FBC could have viewed their landscape from a cosmological perspective, dividing the landscape between a realm for the living and a realm for the dead, with the megaliths as the transitional border. These case studies have also shown that this is not just a regional phenomenon, but could very well have been a supraregional characteristic of the FBC.

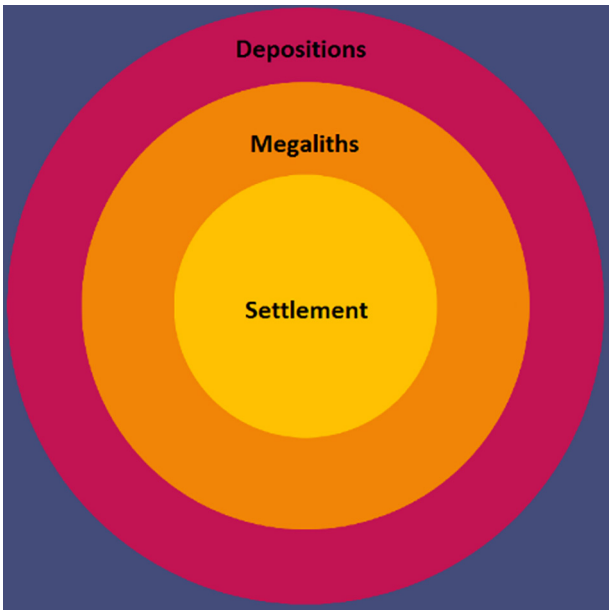

Fig. 3. Schematic representation of the division in the landscape of Drenthe according to Wiersma and Raemaekers 2011.

The specific character of the megalithic tombs can be underlined when one studies their location on a smaller spatial scale as well. Rap (2015) reviewed the location of all the Dutch megaliths (n=53) applying a landscape approach in which she zoomed in on every individual megalith and found an interesting correlation concerning the orientation of the entrances. The megaliths are located on ridges and are therefore located on the border between high and low, and dry and wet, places (*op. cit.* 6). If the orientations were equally distributed each of the directions would be faced by about 25% of the monuments, meaning that a parallel orientation towards the ridge would make up 50%. This was however not the case, almost half of the entrances (49%) were facing the lower part of the landscape, whilst 36% of the entrances were oriented towards the higher parts of the landscape and only 15% of the entrances were facing parallel to the ridge on which the monuments are located (Fig. 5; *op. cit.* 4). In other words, the Dutch megaliths seem to be intentionally oriented towards a certain part of the landscape, favouring the lower parts. This was positively tested with a $\chi 2$ – test (*op. cit.*). This correlation has significant cosmological connotations. It means that the monuments were most often facing the settlements (or the lower, wetter areas in 36% of the cases) with their closed 'backs'. The people living in the settlements would have to go around the monument to reach the other side, effectively entering the realm of the dead or divine. This way the monuments could fulfil a key role in ordering the landscape according to the FBC cosmology. The monuments were built to commemorate the dead and also formed a border, a place of transition, between the land of the living and the land of the dead (Scarre 2011: 9; Rap 2015, 6).

Fig. 4. The location of the megalith graves in Karleby and the viewshed from these places (in red) and the results of the Kernel density analysis on the settlements (in purple; from Hackwitz & Lindholm 2015: figure 8.4).

Synthesising the findings of the studies discussed above, I formulate the following hypothesis on the cosmology of the FBC. It seems that three main aspects of the FBC cosmology can be recognised in the landscape. First, it has become apparent that the people of the FBC have restricted their activities to certain parts of the landscape and divided it into two zones representing the land of the living and the land of the dead, or profane and sacred. Such a structural distinction of sacred and profane in cosmology has been recognized before by the sociologist Durkheim (2001), who stated that death has a very special place in the first sociological formulation of religion. Second, the monumental graves of the FBC seem to have formed the border between the profane and sacred, creating a third transitional zone. Third, the orientation of the megalith monuments also seems to have been important in this transition of going from either the profane to the sacred area or vice versa and emphasizing the change between them.

Oosterdalfsen

Having formulated the hypothesis on the cosmology of the FBC, I will now look whether it will stand ground when tested to the recently discovered FBC cemetery of Oosterdalfsen. The site is located on a small sand ridge adjacent to the old course of an influent of the river Vecht in the Vechtdal region, located to the south of Drenthe (Fig. 1), i.e. a FBC region for which the spatial cosmological model has not yet been proposed. Oosterdalfsen is a special site containing the largest cemetery belonging to the FBC in Europe (Van der Velde & Bouma 2015, 16). A staggering amount of 137 flatgraves (inhumation graves) were uncovered together with an earthen monument and a houseplan, all belonging to the FBC (Fig. 8; see also Van der Velde & Bouma 2015 & 2016).

A comparison between Oosterdalfsen, primarily a flatgrave cemetery, and the hypothesis on FBC cosmology based on megalith tombs might seem misplaced at first sight because of the differences in material and monumentality. However, I would like to argue that the cemetery of Oosterdalfsen can be seen as a monument in itself. Van der Velde and Bouma (2015, 16) noted how Oosterdalfsen acquired a monumental appearance, not only because of its size, but also because of the presence of an earthen long mound (or long barrow). Earthen long mounds have been known in northwest Europe for a long time but their importance as part of the monumental funerary tradition of the FBC has always been overshadowed by the megaliths (Midgley 2005, 99). The megaliths, which are often seen as the 'true stone-built monuments', are often regarded as fundamentally different from contemporary monuments (*op. cit.* 78). Midgley (2005, 78) has however argued that in functionality and symbolism the long mounds should not be regarded as fundamentally different from megalith graves. Firstly, the proportions of the long barrows are certainly not subordinate to the megalith monuments, sometimes they can even be much bigger. However, a large variety in size and form exists in both types of monuments with some features clearly relating to the local conditions (*op. cit.* 89). Secondly, it has become apparent that the long barrows were anything but chamberless (which used to be assumed), incorporating complex constructions made of wood and sometimes even stone (*op. cit.* 99). According to Midgley we should not regard the long barrows and the megaliths as belonging to two different funerary traditions but as part of the same, with some structures indeed built in stone, and others in timber or employing both (Fig. 6). It should be the monumentality of the funerary structures that must be considered as significant, and not the raw materials used in their construction (*op. cit.* 78). I fully agree with this statement, certainly because the megalith

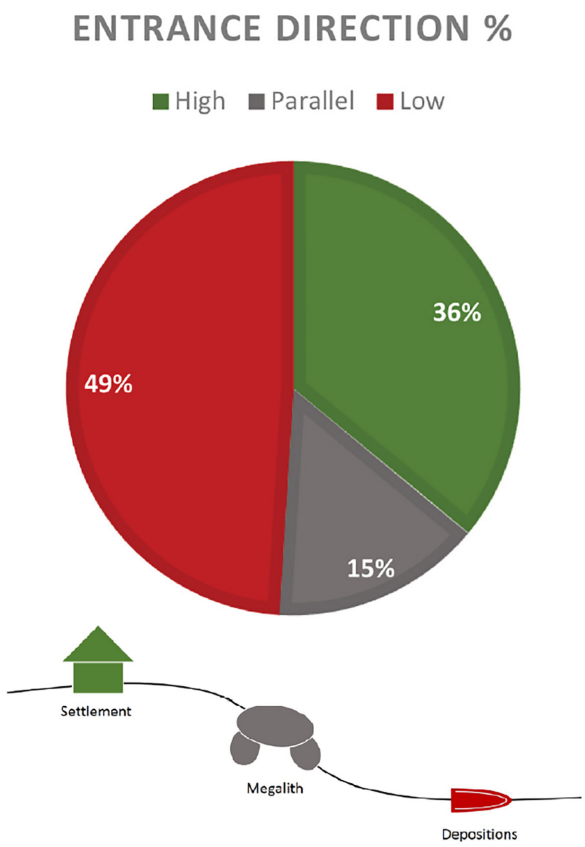

Fig. 5. The percentages of Dutch megaliths facing different elevations (from Rap 2015: figures 6 and 7).

graves in the Netherlands have always been found to be constructed within 350 m from landscape zones from which their boulders were collected (Bakker & Groenman van Waateringe, 1988, 153). In the absence of these large boulders the people of the FBC had to make do with what the landscape provided, resulting in earthen long mounds with the same functionality and symbolism as that of the megalith graves.

The long mound has not left any traces of an entrance that might help with the cosmological interpretation of this structure in Oosterdalfsen. However, it is noted here that throughout Europe there are certain regularities concerning the location of long mound cemeteries in the landscape. It appears that certain 'islands', elevations in the landscape, within particularly boggy, marshy and waterlogged environments might have been deliberately selected for long mounds (Midgley 2005, 82). This could have important cosmological connotations, possibly meaning that long mound cemeteries were particularly equipped to enable the small available spaces to suit the FBC cosmology. Of course one has to keep in mind that the building materials for megalith graves are not often readily available in such landscapes and thus the construction of a long mound is more obvious.

Apart from the earthen monument in Oosterdalfsen it is also expected that all the flatgraves were covered

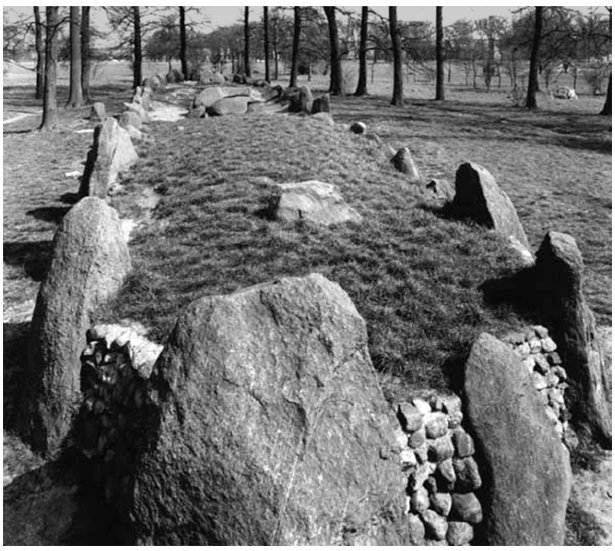

Fig. 6. An example of a long mound in which stones have been used on the outside and in the central chamber, presumably reinforced with timber (D43-Emmen-Schimmeres; from Bakker 2010: figure 3).

by small burial mounds (Van der Velde & Bouma 2016, 361), giving the cemetery an overall monumental appearance. In my opinion Oosterdalfsen can be justifiably compared to a megalith grave site in terms of cosmological significance.

When looking at the topographical location of Oosterdalfsen and other FBC sites along the river Vecht (mostly pottery finds that can be interpreted as settlements) on a regional scale (Fig. 7), it becomes evident that most of the sites are located along the north side of the Vecht. Although the course of the river will have changed slightly since the Neolithic this is not a surprising observation since that is where the sand ridges were located. The landscape adjacent to the sand ridges would have consisted of the river valley and low lying areas in which peat bogs would have been dominant, a landscape too wet and inaccessible for domestic and funerary activities, explaining the linear distribution of FBC sites along the Vecht.

Zooming in to a local scale we can see that the cemetery as well as the long mound follow the linear structure of the sand ridge. Although the sand ridges have since been levelled with the surrounding area by millennia of ploughing activity their position can still be schematically reconstructed (Fig. 8). At the location of the cemetery the sand ridge used to be about 30 m wide. To the north side of the cemetery, following an adjacent depression, another sand ridge was situated on which the houseplan and a few more graves were located. When the long mound was excavated it became apparent that the surrounding ditch was dug in segments, but no opening in the segments could be found (Van den Velde & Bouma 2016, 360). No traces of a chamber were discovered but the discolorations in the white sand of Oosterdalfsen were particularly

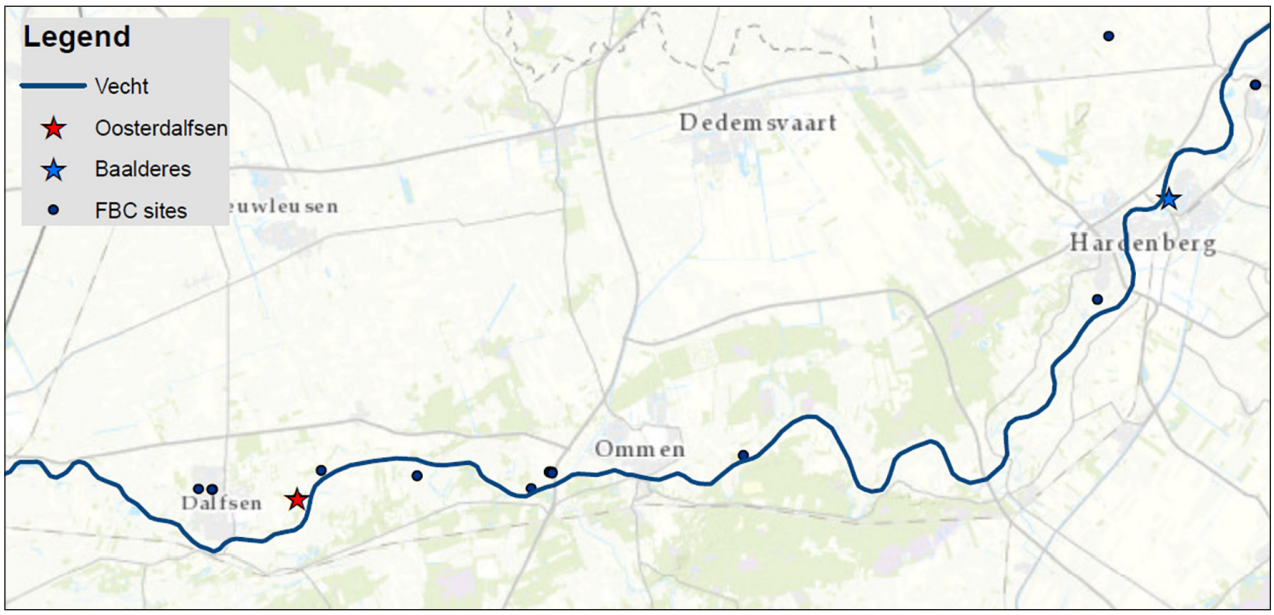

Fig. 7. Topographical map showing the location of Oosterdalfsen, Baalderes (a FBC cemetery of which not much is known, but see Brouwer et.al. 2014), other sites belonging to the FBC and the current flow of the river Vecht (ArcGIS map by author).

vague, so its absence might be due to bad preservation (*op. cit.* 359). Should the long mound have had an entrance we can expect it to have been located along its long sides, either to the north or south. The latter would seem more likely, taking Rap's (2015) results into consideration, since the lower area where the river arm of the Vecht would have flowed is also located to the south (Van den Velde & Bouma 2016, 360).

Discussion

Having looked at the position of Oosterdalfsen in the landscape on two different scales it becomes apparent that the spatial relations between settlements and cemeteries are not the same in Drenthe and the Vechtdal region. However, the patterns in the Vechtdal region also seem to differ on a regional and local scale. On a regional level the settlements and cemeteries in the Vechtdal region seem to display a linear distribution instead of dividing the land into two different zones. As mentioned before this is largely due to the fact that the lower areas around the sand ridges were uninhabitable and also not suited for funerary activities because they were too wet. Thus far any information about ritual depositions in this region is unknown but they would undoubtedly have occurred. On a regional scale the hypothesis regarding FBC cosmology does not seem to hold ground as no spatial aspects of the hypothesised cosmology can be recognised. The places of the living and the places of the dead seem to have been located in the same area, along the river on the sand dunes. There does not seem to be a division between profane and sacred with the cemetery functioning as a border between them.

This linear pattern continues on a local scale but here there seems to be some kind of separation of the landscape. The presence and location of the houseplan in Oosterdalfsen so close to the cemetery is remarkable. On the one hand one could argue that the houseplan does not follow the traditional spatial positioning of FBC settlements in the landscapes because it is only separated from the cemetery by about 30 meters and even contains a grave itself. On the other hand the cemetery is positioned in between the river arm and the houseplan, essentially forming a boundary between the dry land and the river. It is hard to determine whether the spatial relations between the 'settlement' and the cemetery in Oosterdalfsen are in accordance with the hypothesis about the cosmology of the FBC. The sand ridges would have been completely surrounded by peat bogs on one side and a river on the other, which are both wet and considered sacred areas. This did however not stop the people from the FBC from settling in this place. The sand dunes along the river Vecht would have provided the fertile soil needed for agriculture and also provided a safe route from west to east through the overall wet Vechtdal region. It was thus an important region for travelling and maintaining contact with other people and could be economically exploited. Despite the limited amount of space, it appears that the need to settle on such an important place was greater than the need for a clear distinction between the profane and the sacred. However it also appears that the people who lived in this place have at least to a certain degree tried to maintain the cosmological order on a small scale by locating the cemetery between the settlement and the river, but were not fully successful because of the limited space on the small sand ridges and the encircling peat bogs.

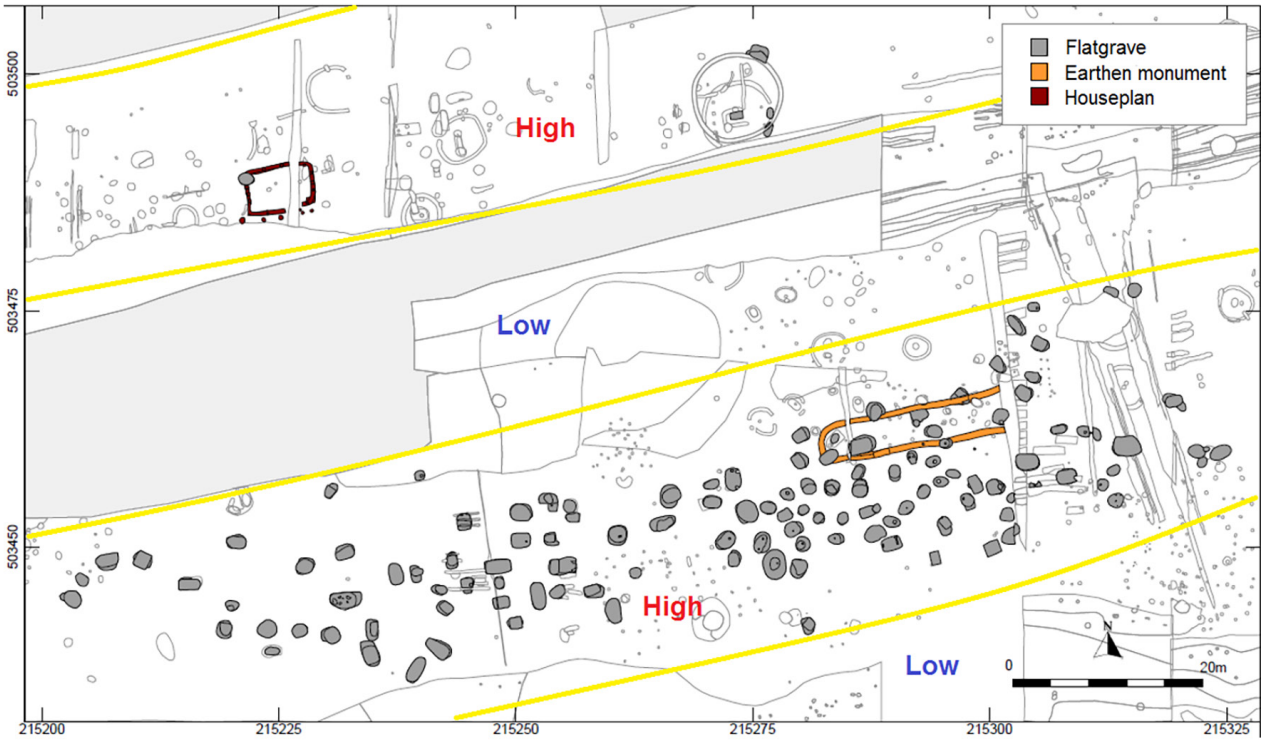

Fig. 8. Excavation plan of Oosterdalfsen with a schematic reconstruction of the sand ridges (ADC ArcheoProjecten).

Conclusion

In this paper I have exploited the idea of reconstructing the cosmological views of the people from the Funnel Beaker culture and the influences of such a cosmology on the spatial organisation of the landscape. I have proposed that the FBC cosmology called for a landscape organisation in which there is a clear distinction between the areas of activities for the living and the dead, or the profane and sacred, with the funerary monuments forming the transitional zone between these areas. These spatial relations have been found present in different FBC landscapes. When this hypothesis was tested on the Vechtdal region, however, it became apparent that the spatial relations between settlements and cemeteries were not always applied in the same manner. The Vechtdal region clearly displays a linear distribution of settlements and cemeteries, a distribution that was restricted to the river sand dunes. Taking this distribution as an expression of the cosmological ideas of the FBC people from this region I can conclude that there exists some variety within the FBC cosmology on a regional scale, essentially creating regional cosmologies. Zooming in to a local scale, to the site of Oosterdalfsen, it becomes clear that the morphology of the landscape, determining the availability of organisable space, plays an important role on how the cosmological ideas are manifested in the landscape. Although the space is limited a certain division between the dry area, with the houseplan, and the wettest area, the river, can be recognised, using the cemetery and the long mound as the boundary between them. Even though Oosterdalfsen is located in an overall wet landscape, on a local level it seems that the people from the FBC have tried to adhere to the rules of the cosmology as hypothesised, possibly making use of a specialized symbolical meaning of the long mound. I therefore conclude that the hypothesis on the FBC cosmology holds true with the adjustment that it allows for regional varieties of which the form and applicability are determined by the resources and space available in the landscape.

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Object and Subject

Re-approaching the landscape of the chamber tombs at Asine (Greece)

Alexandra Vouza

Introduction

It has become a truism in archaeology, anthropology, the social sciences and humanities in a broad sense to return to the material world over the recent years, in contrast to the long scholarly tradition that separated subject from object, mind from material (Oslen, 2003). The tendency of creating contrasting pairs like present and past, human and nature, life and death, object and subject, has been derived from the need of humans to determine their surroundings, even thought that influence both the perception and interpretation of the latter. The dualism of subject-object was developed by Descartes, who termed this model Cartesian tradition. This tradition of creating contrasting pairs was derived from philosophy and influenced the broad field of humanities, including the archaeology. In contrast to Descartes' idea that an individual is an isolated thinking thing, the philosopher Heidegger believed that human beings should be seen as beings engaged in activities in the world. Numerous different perspectives followed (Bourdieu, Gell, Ingold, Gosden) and most of them have converged on some version to Bruno Latour's notion of symmetry between humans and things and to ANT (Actor Network Theory). This new approach was a significant incision of how humans and things move and co-exist on this world.

In this process of determining our relation with our environment it is observed that scientists also ascribe properties and identities to their surroundings, which reflect the fundamental ideas of any society. Archaeology as a science which tries to interpret the past, often deals with contrasting pairs and the interpretation of them is related to the theoretical perspective of the archaeologist involved. One of the major dichotomies is indicated in the case of object and subject and precisely of what we perceive and call object or subject. This contrasting pair is literally composed by *–ject* and the prefixes *sub-* and *ob-*, which each of them embody a variety of ascribed characteristics.

The concept of the current article is to explore how the interpretation of the surroundings as an object or a subject affects our view about the world and by extension our interpretation of the latter. It is often assumed that the landscape and its contained material world are characterized by the terms of functionality and passiveness, because they are regarded as objects and humans as active subjects. This line of thinking has resulted in the perspective that the society is created and produced through the actions of the human agents who are shaped and constrained by the broader society in which they live. However, applying this rationale to prehistoric societies is impossible, because what is considered as an object and subject arises either from the relevant system of values of the past or from our contemporary one. This consideration is inextricably related to the agency that the constituents of this world have. The trajectory of Western thought defined the concept of object as a notion that lacks three aspects: breath, soul and mind. The subject, on the other hand, is limited a priori to action -to what humans do and how they interact- because they act as dynamic agents of the living world.

A short example from Historiography: texts as social agents

The debate among what it is considered as an object and subject is quite prominent in many scientific disciplines, as for instance in History. The main source for the discipline of History and the subject of its study derives from the texts. Historiography went through a fundamental phase in examining the texts which was called 'the linguistic turn' and directed at understanding the mediating force of language in the representation of the past. Historians as scientists intend to investigate the past and interpret it through exploring literary sources or inscriptions, but they also produce texts to represent the past. Generally, texts have to be constructed according to rules of grammar, syntax and meanings of the words. That observation led historians to realise that their main source -texts- could be geared to these linguistic rules rather than to the past and that taking texts at face value by considering their content as historical fact was a very simplistic idea.

Texts, used by historians, are not only reflecting the world but creating it as well, since language has a significant feature, the plasticity of speech. According to the above observations, historians introduced enquires such as when was a text was written, by whom and for what kind of audience; these questions led them to characterize text as a *performative* element.

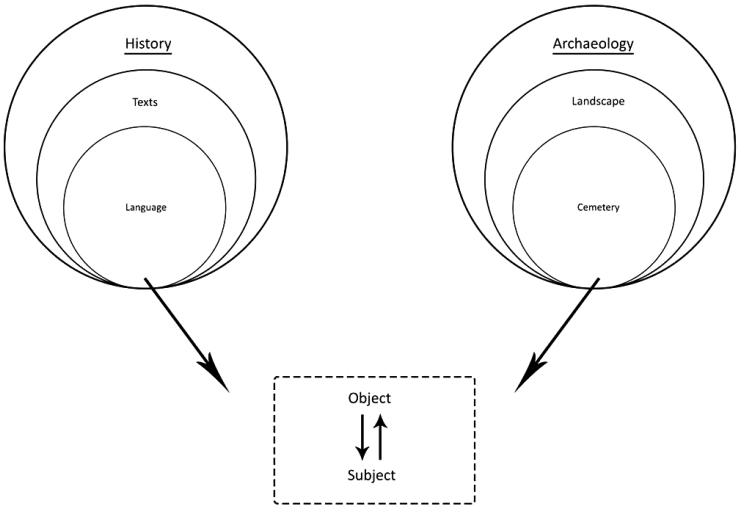

Fig. 1. Schematic representation of the theoritical approach of the current article. History and Archaeology act as analogous disciplines, which use as sources the texts and the landscape, respectively. The components of to take the role of object and subject.

The concept of *performative* utterance was developed by the philosopher John Langshaw Austin. He argued that the *performative* utterances are not true or false and actually perform the action to which they refer; the utterance is itself the act. They do not describe but perform the action they designate (Cullen, 1997: 94-95). Addressing these questions, historians were able to reverse the role of texts from objects to subjects and vice versa. By failing to address these enquires, they will be unable to analyse the context of production and their use. The context, in which a text is situated and created, is itself composed of constituted meanings and the connections between them are essential intertextual. It is impossible, on this basis, to identify aspects of social, political or economic life which somehow stand apart from or make up a ''reality'' independent of the cultural constructions which historically conditioned discourses generate; text and context are collapsed into one broad vein of discursive production (Spiegel, 1997: 14).

An interesting anthropological approach towards texts was made by Claude Levi-Strauss, who studied texts as symbolic action. This angle places the text in the role of the subject which has embedded symbolisms and creates new ones when it comes in dialectic contact with humans. The duality that characterizes the role of texts, has been conveyed concisely by Gabrielle Spiegel in the phrase 'the social logic of the text', a term which was used in order to place the text within an embedded social environment of which it is a product and in which it is an agent (Spiegel, 1997: 53). Hence, the relation that historians have with their preliminary sources, the texts, is interactive, since the content of what they study has the potential to act as an object or a subject. Having either of those properties, a text can affect the perspective of the scholar respectively and thereby their interpretation about the past. Could the study of landscape be an analogous scope, where the dualism of object-subject affects the archaeological interpretation? Before answering to this question, it would be vital to consider the theoretical approaches about the twofold role of landscape as an object and a subject (fig.1).

Defining object and subject

Landscape has, for long time, been approached from various disciplines and ambiguous definitions have been expressed about this kaleidoscopic term (Vavouranakis, 2007: 59). Even within the discipline of archaeology, the concept of landscape is used in entirely diverse and sometimes directly opposing perspectives. Traditional research has equated the visual representation of the land to the land itself, considering landscape as a mere canvas for human activity. That old holistic model gave way during the 1960s and 1970s to more advanced theories and models for spatial analysis, according to quantitative and statistical methods (Kolen & Renes, 2015: 23-24). However, these approaches treated humans more as anonymous statistical factors rather than as active social agents. This perspective featured the notion of landscape with the aspects of function, object, passive and background detaching landscape from any active role.

In contrast, constructivist scholars (Tilley, 1994) introduced an opposite view in landscape archaeology, placing the idea of landscape as a set of relational places linked by pathways, movements and narratives. The starting point of all phenomenological thinking is the mutual implication of the human subject (actor) and his or her world. Based on this ground, yet archaeologists were focused to a very *humanocentric* approach of the world, seeking for possible links (values, meanings, identities) with any human activity. Of course, that resulted to the sideling of anything that was not defined as subject (the material culture and the landscape). The emphasis on the human beings and theirs interrelations, belief systems, social hierarchies and meanings led to the instrumentalization of the landscape and the material culture and to the use of them as an arena of expression. But, what about the other way around? It would be sensible to investigate landscape as a wide spectrum of impression rather than expression. (Samuels, 1979)

Inspired by the disciplines of sociology and anthropology, numerous studies have been published about the role of landscape and its relation with human beings. The notion of agency constituted a milestone to the new archaeological and anthropological theories. One of the first scholars who expressed his

theory about the symmetry between *ob*-jects and *sub*-jects was the sociologist Bruno Latour, on the basis of whom a wider debate was introduced about the agency of materiality in archaeology (Gosden, Ingold, Meskell, Gell, Mauss). It should be pointed out, that at the current article our reference to the agency of material culture would accomplish our goal to detect the agency of landscape and our approach towards the latter through the object-subject concept. This analogy would not equate landscape with material culture, but it would be significant in the process of comprehending how our mind is influenced and manipulated by the established concepts of subject and object, active and passive and other dualistic models.

Latour observed that in our society the notion of subject is limited to human activity, while object had no chance to play any role. The latter might exist in the domain of 'material', 'causal' relations, but not in the 'reflexive', 'symbolic', domain of social relations. He used a variety of examples from everyday life in order to support that anything that modifies a state of affairs by making a difference is an actor. In the course of action humans and non-humans (the so called objects) interact, but it does not mean that these participants determine the action (Latour, 2005).The actor-network theory of Latour it is not a claim that objects create things instead of humans, but it is a theoretical model that incites scholars to be critical towards to the participants in the course of action.

Objects exist naturally, but they do not have any social thought, as for instance a throne. In past societies, a throne could be a thing which had numerous ascribed connotations of power, hierarchy, status and wealth instead of servants, who were living at the margins of the local community. Indeed, servants in some past societies had none characteristic of the aspects which constitute the human being. On the contrary, a throne represented ideas about the fabric of the society; it was respected and looked after by humans almost like being a dynamic actor, which had its own agency towards to the members of the society. Similar cases can be detected at a cemetery, where the landscape has an ascribed passive role according to already given interpretations. Nevertheless, if we will detach our mind from the ascribed meanings and characteristics our society has given to landscape, we will observe that as material world is treated exclusively as passive and functional, in the same way landscape has been placed at the background of human taskscape having the role of an object.

The actor-network theory of Latour constituted the backbone for Tim Ingold's approach to the landscape and to the agency of the *things*. He introduced a very fundamental term towards defining landscape, the notion of *taskscape*. By taskscape, Ingold is referred

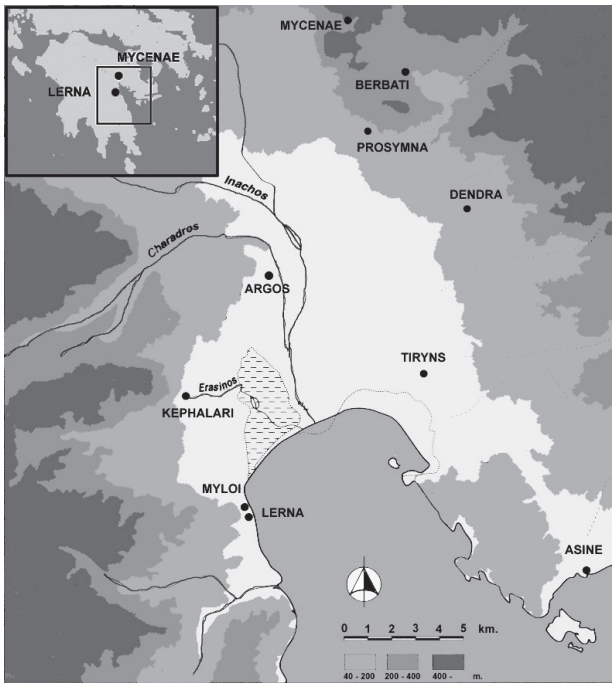

Fig. 2. Map of the Argolid and main Mycenaean Sites (After Voutsaki 2012, fig.1).

to the totality of activities which are interlinked. He comes to the conclusion, by elimination, that 'the landscape as whole must be understood as the taskscape in its embodied form': a sequence of activities collapsed into an array of features (Ingold , 2000: 195-198).

Landscape and taskscape are not opposed, but they complement one another. These notions will allow us to perceive the forms of landscape (e.g. a grave) as an analogy to material world that has the potential to enact either as objects or subjects. People and materials should be understood as interacting entities, alternately playing agent as trajectories of movement responding to one another in counterpoint. In the same way, the landscape interacts with people at the nodes of their course of action. Landscape, since it is an array of activities, should be seen as a space of human activity and interactivity. The possible combinations of interactivity are: human to human, human to landscape and landscape to human. On the basis of this ratiocination, any of the two components can have the role of object and subject. According to Ingold, the problem does not lie in the *sub-* or *ob-,* or on the supremacy of the one to the other, as in the *–ject.* In their entirety the constituents of the world – including landscape- are imbued with characteristics of *ob-* or *sub-* before they can act or act upon (Ingold, 2011: 214). It will be illustrated in the following case study that the perception of landscape is the dominant feature that determines which will be the cause and which the effect, and how the relation between humans and landscape can be reversed.

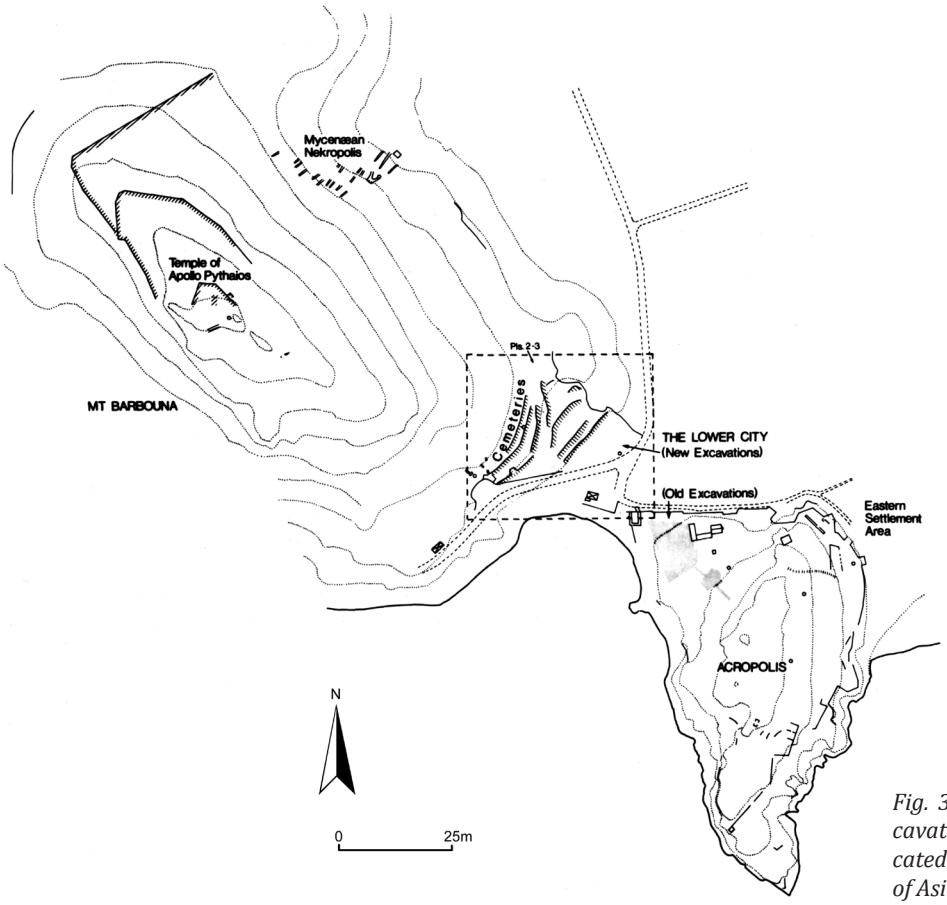

Fig. 3. General site plan of Asine. The excavated mycenaean chamber tombs are located at the north-east site of the acropolis of Asine (After I. Hägg & R. Hägg 1980, fig.1).

Another aspect that should be taken into account to this object-subject concept is the notion of form. The form of the things and the landscape that surround us consists of a key feature of how we perceive something and interact with it, since it encapsulates our visual sense. A reversal angle towards the conventional object- subject relations was given by the archaeologist Chris Gosden. He suggests that, in many cases, it is not the mind that imposes its forms on material objects, but rather the latter that give shape to the forms of the thought (Gosden, 2005: 196). The same applies to the forms of landscape. Humans and landscapes are both created and creating. Our surroundings are shaped by human action through a rhythmic interference. However, landscapes are also the shapers of human action allowing and limiting various forms of land-use and inter-regional connections. This conjunction of forces is expressed also visually and during this process what act as object, passive, functional, as something that lies at the background can alternate promptly to an active subject that gives meaning at the other end of the spectrum (Gosden & Head, 1994).

The Late Helladic chamber tombs of Asine (Argolid, Greece)

The above theoretical approach of landscape in now applied at the case of the Asine's cemetery. Asine is located at the north-eastern part of the Peloponnese, in Greece. (fig.2) The Late Helladic cemetery on Barbouna hill (c.1500-1200 BC) is close to the Acropolis of Asine. It is constituted by chamber tombs –cut out of the rock– which was a representative type tomb during Mycenaean period. Mycenaean chamber tombs are constituted by a passage (*dromos*) long or short, whose sides converge upwards without meeting. The passage leads through a rather narrow entrance (*stomion*), which often takes the actual form of a door, and is generally closed by means of stone-packing, into the tomb chamber itself. The latter is vaulted, sometimes gabled, square or somewhat round in shape, and varies in size. Occasionally it has lateral niches and also grave-pits, cut in the floor. The excavations were conducted during the 1920s and were published by Frödin and Persson in 1938. The preliminary report (*Asine results of the Swedish excavation 1922-1930*) is very detailed, with objects being documented on photographs and plans concerning the location of the graves. However, the limitations of the publication cannot be denied. Being aware of the fact that not only the archaeological methods used but also the technology was different, compared with today, a different approach could be suggested, in order to cover the wide spectrum of the relationship between landscape and human beings, *mutatis mutandis*.

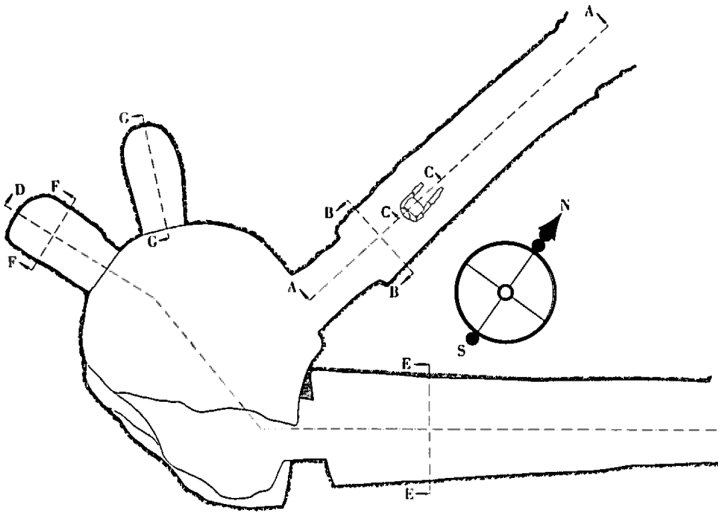

Fig. 4. Plan of the chamber tomb 1 (After Frödin & Persson 1938, fig.134).

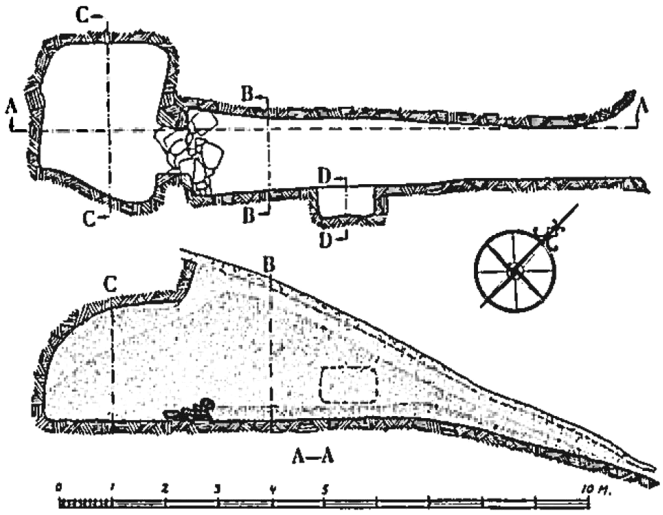

Fig. 5. Plan of the chamber tomb 3 (After Frödin & Persson 1938, fig.142).

The number of the excavated chamber tombs is limited and in the publication of the Swedish excavators we are lacking a clear overview of the role of landscape for the prehistoric societies of Asine. Moreover, the publication is not based on a contextual analysis, but rather on the architecture of the tombs. Their description includes some evidence about the landscape, but is separately presented from the analysis of the burial offerings (Sjöberg, 2001). Any interpretation of the graves is included at the last chapter of the publication. Considering the structure of the publication the reader can instantly notice that the landscape is presented as product of human activity. The excavator and author of the part on the chamber tombs, Otto Frödin, orient us to the area according to the related settlement, on the acropolis hill. The location of the chamber tombs is presented in correlation with artificial evidence like the walls and the terraces. (fig.3) Thereafter, the presentation of each chamber tomb follows, but the data are given by author in a descriptive way. Such a descriptive publication allows us to recommend some new approaches of the landscape by examining some of the chamber tombs that possibly can enlighten our view about that past society.

The importance of chamber tomb 1 lies in the fact that it has two *dromoi*: this sets it apart from the other seven chamber tombs. The two *dromoi* belong to different ages, since the northern one occupies quite a symmetrical position in relation to the main chamber and a Late Helladic cist grave was created, after its abandonment (fig.4). The southern dromos dates later, but was used for a shorter period. It is in particular noteworthy to notice the determinant role of the landscape and how it affected human activity. The entrance of the old northern *dromos* collapsed and that led people to consciously open a new *dromos* towards the main chamber. At this case, we notice that the landscape of the area acts as a subject, since it limits human activity by the collapse of the entrance. According to the new reality, people were in a position of object, which had as a result for them to be placed at the background and into being at a passive state. However, humans consciously decide later on to open the new southern dromos as far as the properties of the landscape allowed them. Concerning the properties of landscape, the bedrock consists of easily worked, soft, granular and stratified limestone with soft shale; although some parts of the Barbouna hill are composed of very hard, grey limestone of which

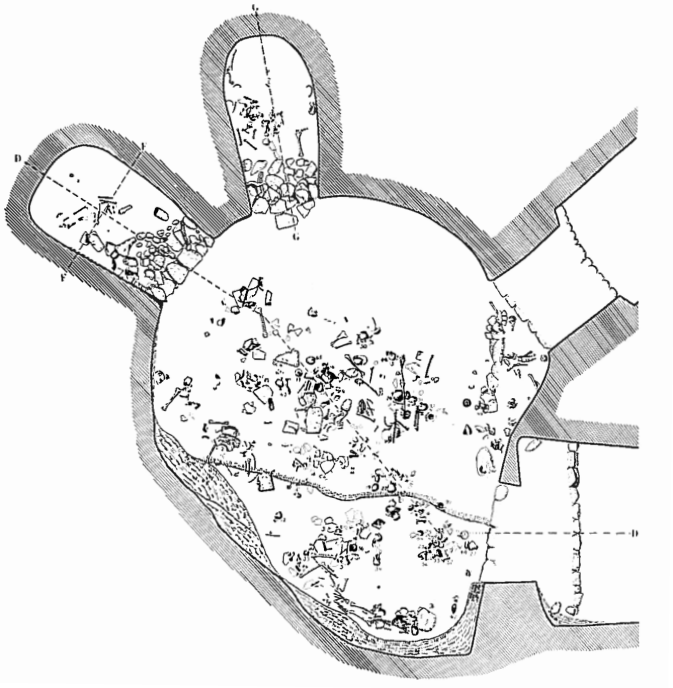

Fig. 6. Plan of the niches of the main chamber at tomb 1 (After Frödin & Peersson 1938, fig.135).

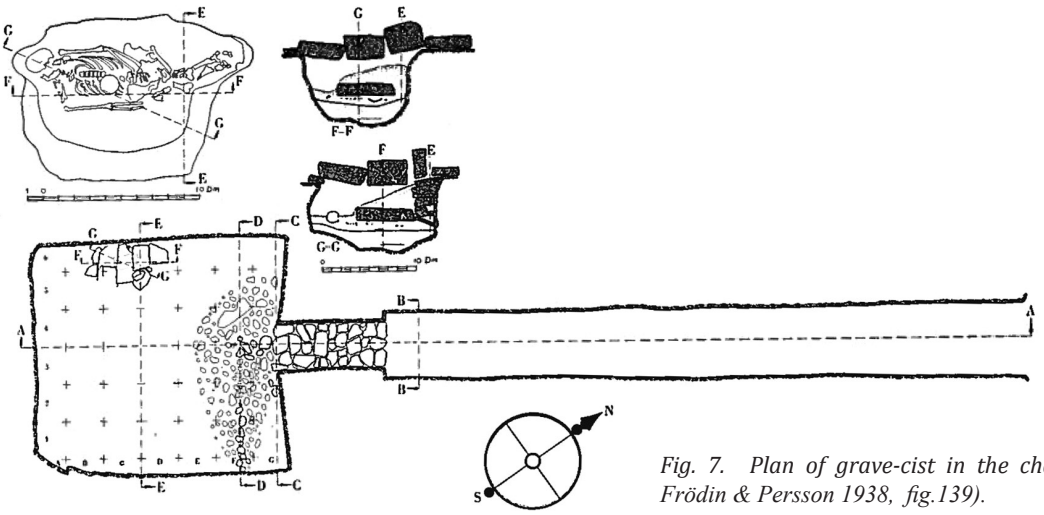

Fig. 7. Plan of grave-cist in the chamber tomb 2 (After Frödin & Persson 1938, fig.139).

the bedrock of the district mostly consists (Frödin & Persson, 1938).

Similar 'subjective' behaviour is indicated at the chamber tomb 3, which was found empty of any bone remains or burials offerings. The author suggested that maybe that result derived from the decision of the people, who used the chamber tomb, to abandon the grave, because of the poor consistency of the rock; it is also a possible scenario that the human bones and burial offerings found in the *dromos* niche originally lied in the chamber, but when this was unsafe people removed them and placed them in the niche intended for this purpose (fig. 5). On the basis of this interpretation, we notice once more that the landscape performed as a subject imposing the boundaries to humans and by changing its ascribed function. In parallel though, humans obtain later their subjective position at the moment of creating the niche on the abandon *dromos* and interfering to the initial form of the chamber tomb.

The embedded agency of landscape enables it to co-formulate the space parallel to the human activity as is illustrated by chamber tombs 1 and as we it will be examined in chamber tomb 2. Frödin presents a view of active human agents who move among the landscape and by their actions they express their thoughts concerning the structure of the graves and the way that those would be approached during the funeral.

However, at the cases of chamber tomb 1 and 2 people did not only express themselves but were impressed as well by the properties of the landscape. Focussing now on chamber tomb 1, it is observed that two side-niches were cut out of the rock at the north-western chamber wall which were intended as separate tombs for one corpse according to the bone remains (fig.6). The desire of humans to deposit the remains of their ancestors in niches, intended for them, was accomplished by the given plasticity of the land. The landscape on itself has the properties and the potential dynamics, to a certain extent, to steer indirectly the form of human thought. However, the interactivity between humans and landscape is so entangled that it is not possible to identify which of the two components has the dominant role. The chamber tomb 2 is a corresponding case with the above one, since in the main chamber a grave-pit was found cut out of the rock parallel with the long axis of the chamber. The shape of the subsequent grave is irregular oval with special widening for the head and the feet of the corpse (fig.7). At this case it is also observed that humans return to the landscape, they re-negotiate their relation with it and they interfere to the form of the already shaped chamber. People carved the chamber in a particular way that served the placement of the head and the feet. At the same time, the landscape of the chamber has the appropriate flexibility in order to be transformed and carter to humans' needs.

Synthesis

Let us amalgamate these sociological-anthropological approaches with the revised view of the prehistoric chamber tombs. The perception of the relation between humans and their landscapes, as it was presented above, depends to a large extent on the concepts we have about the object–subject and our symbolic sets. The alternating property of landscape to act and be acted upon by humans consists that characteristic that makes its role to change from object to subject. The equivalent process may occur also for humans, who do not act exclusively as dynamic entities, but they get influenced or limited by the forms and the agency the landscape is embedded. The perception of the Swedish archaeologists concerning the case of chamber tombs at Asine, placed humans at the foreground of the space, as entities which constructed and gave meaning and symbolisms to the cemetery. However, the characteristics of chamber tombs

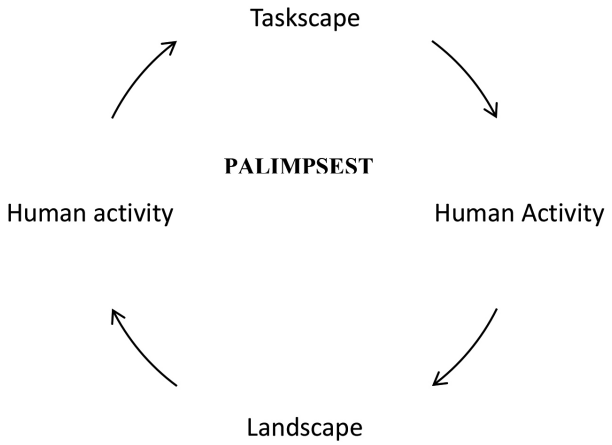

Fig. 8. Schematic representation of the interelation of landscape and human activity and their rythimic re-inscription of spaces as being a palimpsest.

indicate that, approaching them from a different theoretical perspective, their alternative role is shaping on the meeting nodes with the human action. The land of the cemetery at Asine embodies a local sense of collective memory and history. People engage with their surroundings and by so doing they are always entangled in complex webs of relations.

The landscape in our case study, as the texts of historians, acted as a *performative* element. This can illustrate the embedded narrative of each tomb, while, in parallel, landscape has the potency to create its own and new storyline, as well. The Late Helladic graves constituted a *taskscape* where people had to carry out the funeral activities, the purification of the tomb and the return in order to conduct the secondary burials. It is noteworthy that the tripartite structure of the tomb *dromos-stomion*-chamber provided a shape to the landscape, which serves the symbolisms and the process of funeral. At the very moment it had the required properties -it was manipulated- either because of the collapse of the entrance or the creation of an additional niche upon the original plan. The *dromos* was a result of the interference of the humans to the landscape (defined in environmental terms) and a dynamic agent as well, which was 'forcing' and limiting people to walk on its axis.

Another observation, on the basis of the alternate motion of landscape between the roles of object and subject, is the fact that in some cases as for instance in chamber tomb 1 and 2, the landscape became a palimpsest consisting of layers of meaning that people leave upon it and of interactivities that arise. The notion of palimpsest that landscape embodies needs to draw upon in order to re-order the space. In other words, the interactivity among landscape and humans produces meaningful spaces and the production of these spaces is informed by the palimpsest of meanings and narratives that the landscape already embodies. This re-negotiation and dynamic relation was indicated by the creation of the grave-cist in chamber tomb 2 and the niches in chamber tomb 1, where humans returned to the tomb of their ancestors in order to inscribe the landscape with a new narrative (fig.8).

Conclusion

The funerary activity is a powerful standpoint for the perception of the landscape, because humans are required to renegotiate a varied web of inter-relations. Equally varied are the perspectives on the landscape and its role on the world. Our views towards landscape or any other subject of study run the risk of projecting personal and contemporary concepts on societies and systems which maybe had a different set and ideas about the surroundings. Being detached and objective is a non-applicable scenario for any science, since we do not live in a vacuum. However, the examples from historiography and archaeology in correlation to the sociological and anthropological methodologies substantiated and underlined that addressing the inquiries of who is or acts as a subject and which as an object can play a determinant role to our interpretation. The dualism between subject and object is not referring to any supreme property of the one or the other; in contrast it is a concept which embeds a rhythmic dialectical relation between the components of the world.

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"I am the river, the river is me"

Landscape perception and heritage as underlying concepts of a conflict between government and indigenous people

Berna van Wijk

Introduction

Every day we perceive the landscape we live in, work in, travel in and members of our community are buried in, in a different and often personal way: our mood, our memories of a specific place, weather circumstances and former experiences can influence and change our perception of the landscape around us. The perception of a landscape can be experienced individually or communally and can change over time. A cityscape may seem hostile to an Amazon aboriginal and a barren dessert will be repulsive for most city dwellers, however adaptation allows people to live in conditions previously conceived as adverse (Garvey and Bettinger 2014). Perception as point of view to study prehistoric landscapes is part of the phenomenological approach in archaeology. Historically, the emphasis in archaeological research shifted from settlement and subsistence to a more socio-symbolic approach in which humans "perceive, experience and contextualize" the landscape they dwell in (Knapp and Ashmore 1999, 1-5). Concepts like economic and political landscapes were not abandoned but are now accompanied by ideational, symbolic, mythical and sacred landscapes to achieve a more comprehensive view in the archaeological reconstruction of past landscapes (*loc. cit.*). Johnston (1998) has introduced two types of perception, the explicit perception and the inherent perception. I want to investigate the relevance of these concepts in landscape perception in an ongoing dispute as will be presented in a case study.

A second concept I want to address is heritage. Heritage can have many faces: a state's national and official heritage, the local memories of communities (Harrison 2010a, 11) or the global cultural and natural landscapes mentioned in the UNESCO Convention (UNESCO 2016, 10-11). Heritage is connected to archaeology as unearthed sites, artefacts and landscapes enter the public realm when preserved or when presented in museums. Again, as with perception, heritage, in whatever form, can be perceived as important and valid to the people concerned (Harrison 2010a, 11). In 2007, on the instigation of New-Zealand, a fifth "C", which stands for "community" is added to the four strategic objectives[1] used in the assessment of sites being eligible for World Heritage status. Collaboration with local communities (e.g. indigenous people) is vital in the successful management and conservation of heritage, and in the "reconciliation of conflicted interests" (UNESCO 2007, 2). However, heritage can also be a source of conflict when the perception of heritage is not shared throughout communities or nations as is illustrated by the case of the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan by the Taliban (Harrison 2010b, 154-196).

A conflict about the management of the landscape of the Waikato River by the government of New-Zealand and Maori tribes, the indigenous inhabitants, will be presented as the case study in this paper. Besides applying Johnston's types of perception to analyse the conflict, the concept of heritage is also of interest in this dispute because, as I will argue, it relates to the concept of perception. What is perceived as heritage by one party can be perceived as heresy by another party as the example in Afghanistan illustrates. Is the Waikato River perceived as heritage or as a commodity by either side and can this discrepancy be a source of the conflict as well? In a broader perspective this case study focuses on the division between a western perception and an indigenous or local perception on both landscape and heritage. It relates to questions concerning the capability of a western organisation like UNESCO or a government based on a colonial past for/of setting the criteria for protecting cultural and natural landscapes that are intertwined with an indigenous set of values. Whose perception and what kind of perception of a landscape, or a site, or an intangible practice such as a song, is decisive in obtaining the label heritage?

Explicit and inherent perception of landscape

Perception is a key concept in phenomenology which "involves the understanding and description of things as they are experienced by a subject",[2] (Tilley 1994, 12). A phenomenological approach to landscape is introduced within the so-called post-processual paradigm in archaeology in which environmental factors are no longer viewed as the only or main influencing

1 Credibility, Conservation, Capacity-building and Communication. UNESCO 2016, 5.

2 The subject in this case is a human being to avoid a philosophical debate about this topic.

aspects of human behaviour. Human agency applies meaning and symbolism to the layout of the landscape, like the deliberate placing of megalithic monuments or other features to be visible and connected to one another (Tilley 1994, 109; 142; 200-201). Perception can be seen as the process of receiving, organizing, identifying, and interpreting sensory stimuli structured through smell, sound, taste, touch and sight (Dhingra and Dhingra 2011, 64). Besides the biological and physiological processes related to sensory input, the reception of these stimuli is anything but passive. People use their, subjective, earlier experiences, feelings, opinions, expectations and their belief system to fit the 'meaning' of what is perceived to their own preconceptions (*loc. cit.*). In other words, we see things, other people and events in the world around us not as they really are, but as we are. Understanding our environment and being able to interact with it is a dynamic process since we as humans both adapt to and change the landscape we live in. The perception of our environment can be an individual process as much as a communal one when a collective set of beliefs ties families, tribes and nations together. For instance, a landscape which has seen battles in the past can be perceived as part of a communal memory and become part of local heritage (Harrison 2010a, 11). However, embedded in the aforementioned subjectivity of perception is the critique authors like Fleming (2006, 275; 279) have on the lack of empiricism or scientific basis of phenomenology. He argues that Tilley's approach, seeing a landscape as hostile and dangerous, is arbitrary, as Fleming himself (*op. cit.*, 247) sees equal validation in viewing the same landscape as "safe and reassuring".

This observation of a dual perception of the same landscape has led Johnston (1998) to question if perception, if it exists, can be explicitly identified and isolated or if it is embedded in the daily practices of living (*op. cit.*, 54). For Johnston, perception implies subjectivity and distortion and is open to a variety of interpretations. Two main concepts, or interpretations, in the perception of landscape have been introduced by Johnston: explicit and inherent (*op. cit.*, 57). In the explicit approach perception is seen as an entity, measurable and tangible whereas in the inherent approach perception is not recognised as an abstract, measurable quality. Perception in the inherent approach is an embedded element in the landscape experience (*loc. cit.*).

In an explicit perception a distinction is recognised between the 'real' world and the perceived world (*loc. cit.*). The existence of an outside, static world and an inner, cognitive image is evidently shown in cognitive mapping. Whether a city plan is drawn (Liu *et al.* 2016, 818), the rooms in a house (Fig. 1) or the route

Fig. 1. Cognitive map of a housplan (From: http://psc.dss.ucdavis.edu/sommerb/sommerdemo/mapping/cogmap.htm).

to favourable hunting grounds (Lovis and Donahue 2011, 60; fig. 3.1), our mind makes a representation of the world as we perceive it to be. A coastline can be drawn straight instead of meandering (*op. cit.*, 64) and rooms may be drawn relatively larger or smaller than they are. Another example is the relation between the time spend in a landscape, the form of travel and the detail in which a landscape is experienced and processed (Johnston 1998, 58). These latter aspects may hint at an association of the perceptual relationship with the environment and settlement patterns (*op. cit.*, 60). In other words, a non-random preference for settlement locations can be based on the perception of the landscape. Both examples share common ground: the preconceptions or biases of the observer, the context of the observed and the reaction of the observer all influence how the landscape is experienced (*op. cit., 58*). The underlying theoretical principle of explicit perception is a dichotomy between an external, material world and an internal cognitive image. Tilley (2006, 20) argues landscape is always an "objective physical place and a subjective cognized image of that place", which seems in accordance with the explicit perception.

The inherent perception of the landscape makes no distinction between the 'real' landscape and the perceived landscape. Both Tilley (1994, 12) and Johnston (1998, 61) reuse Martin Heidegger's concept of Being-in-the-world as central to phenomenology (Tilley) and to explain "human embeddedness in the landscape" (Johnston). No distinction can be made between the realms of the dead and the living. Both realms exist within one reality and in the same temporality, as is attested by a tribe in the Amazon (Johnston 1998, 61). However, one needs some imagination besides ethnographic research to interpret how landscapes have been viewed in the past, leaving criticaster Fleming (2006, 273) wondering whether it is possible to break into this magical garden of phenomenology as "one of the unenlightened". According to Johnston (1998, 63) the inherent approach to landscape lets perception be a part of the process of understanding the world around us, yet makes the distinction between landscape and people razor thin to the point upon which perception can no longer be defined ("I am the river, the river is me").

Both perceptions on landscape have had their influence on archaeological research of human influences on past landscapes (Van Dommelen 1999, 286-287; Thomas 2012, 175), and have had their critiques (Fleming 2006). The explicit view has led to empirical results, the inherent view is often unclear and open to interpretation (Johnston 1998, 64). The two concepts of perception are distinctive and mutually exclusive according to Johnston (*op. cit.*, 57), indicating different underlying principles and cannot both be applicable. The latter indicates/meaning that a person perceives the landscape in one way or the other and not both as explicit and inherent. However, the question arises if, in turn, a landscape can indeed be perceived in both ways, as may be the matter in the Waikato river case study.

Heritage

Another relevant concept in the study of the conflict between the New-Zealand government and the Maori tribes is heritage. When delving into the world-wide web one can find a myriad of definitions and descriptions of what heritage is perceived to be. Heritage may be cultural, natural and can be both material and immaterial, or tangible and intangible. Heritage can also be selective when industrial or agricultural heritage is the focal point of research. The UNESCO guidelines (2016, 10-11) make a difference between cultural and natural heritage which consist of monuments, groups of buildings and sites. These categories have specific characteristics that make them have Outstanding Universal Value (capitals UNESCO) from the point of view of history, art and science. Sites, including archaeological ones, can have this Value from a historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view (*loc. cit.*). The new Heritage Law in the Netherlands (*Erfgoedwet* 2015) not only regards material sources as cultural heritage but explicitly mentions immaterial sources as a definition of cultural heritage.[3] Those sources are reflecting values, convictions, knowledge and traditions which for people now and in the future can form a framework of reference. A third definition, or rather description, of cultural and historical heritage is found in New-Zealand given by Heritage New-Zealand Pouhere Taonga's (HNZPC).[4] Natural and physical resources such as historic places, areas, sites, archaeological sites and sites significant to the Maori containing, amongst others, aesthetic, technological, social, scientific or cultural (including intangible) values, are considered heritage. Sites or structures which have been occupied prior to 1900 are protected under the Resource Management Act and specifically for archaeological sites the Heritage New-Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act is applicable.

The legal context of heritage could imply the existence of one type of heritage, the 'official' one, which is selected by governmental bodies involved in the maintenance, funding and promotion of sites (Harrison 2010a, 14; Willems 2000, 159). A more informal kind of heritage may exist when people experience a sense of a collective past at specific locations which are thus perceived as significant for society (Harrison 2010a, 11), however will never be listed as 'national heritage'. Multiple 'heritages' may be the result of the gap between the official selection by the state and public perception. This selection can raise questions like: who decides what is registered as official heritage and by what kind of criteria or values? Besides the role of heritage in the formation of state ideologies, the economic aspect in the form of increased tourism should not be neglected in the process of selection (*op. cit.*, 15). Together with laws and regulations at local or national level, these aspects determine and manage heritage and thus make it become part of the political domain. This 'top-down' approach is in contrast with the 'bottom-up' approach where the people are seen as the creators and maintainers of the more intangible aspects of heritage (e.g. song, language, rites and beliefs) according to Harrison (*op. cit.*, 38). Without qualifying the distinction, a state-regulated heritage system seems to be in place next to a more public, or even indigenous, heritage system. Whilst on a global scale UNESCO can

3 Wet van 9 december 2015, houdende bundeling en aanpassing van regels op het terrein van cultureel erfgoed (Erfgoedwet). Staatsblad 2015.

4 http://www.heritage.org.nz

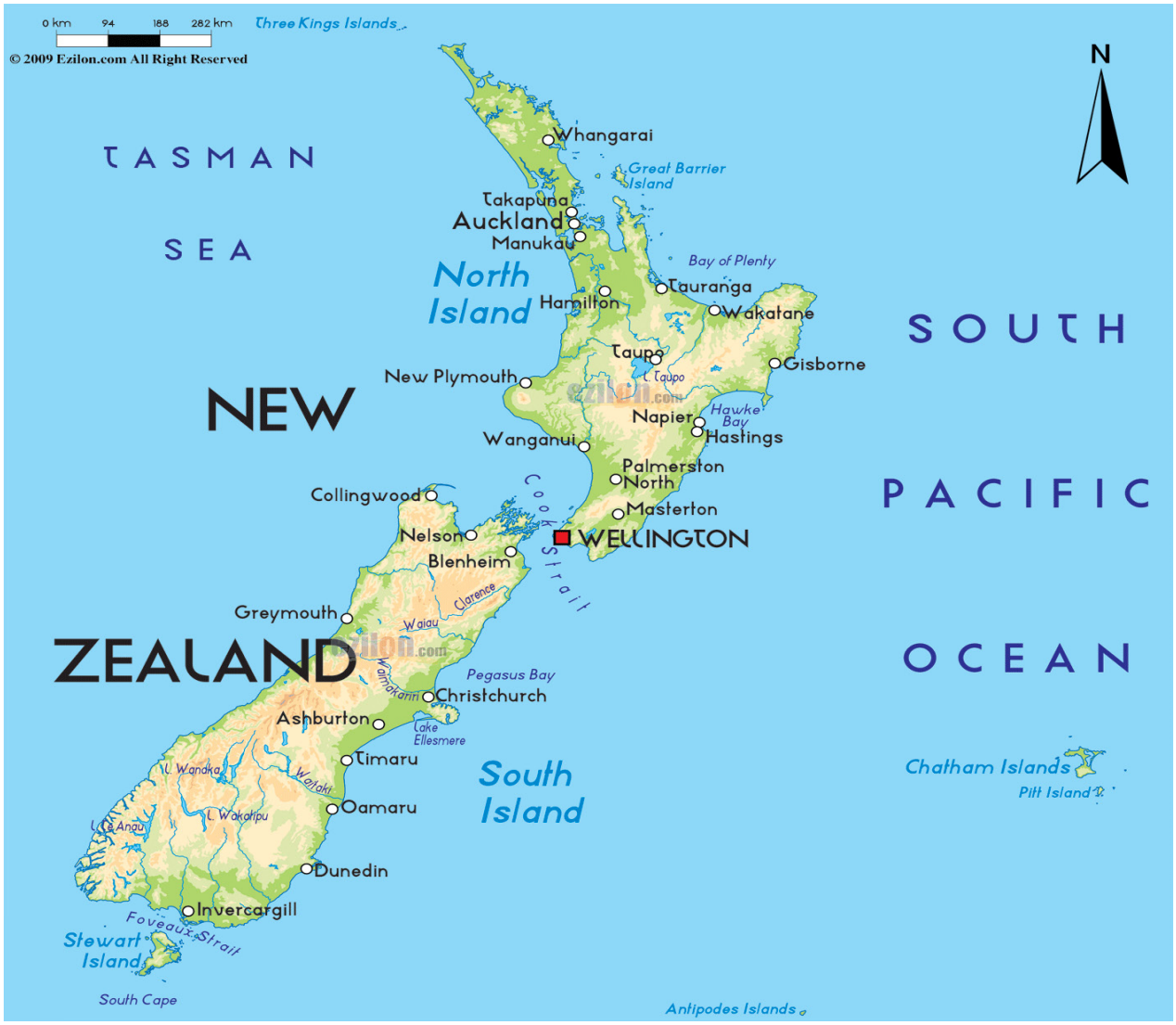

Fig. 2. New-Zealand, with central on the North Island, Lake Taupo (From: www.ezilon.com/maps).

be seen as the decision-maker in attributing "Universal Value" to cultural and natural heritage.

Anything assigned by an authority to become heritage, whether with the adjective archaeological, cultural or natural, enters the political arena of laws, regulations, funding and protection (Harrison 2010a, 26; Willems 2000, 166). The allocation of heritage is in itself a possible sparkle in the making of a conflict: what enters the official heritage list and what doesn't? Archaeology and archaeological remains have been made political in the making of a national identity by nation-states who validate these remains as heritage (Brück and Stutz 2016, 4) and are part of conflicts. Ownership of cultural heritage is a reliable indicator for structural conflict (*loc. cit.*): individual ownership of objects that have a national importance, or artefacts looted from source countries (i.e. part of a national heritage) and displayed in western museums. The destruction of the numerous Buddha statues from the 7th c. A.D. in the Bamiyan Valley in Afghanistan is one of the more recent, and for some a blatant, example of the collision of religious, cultural and (international) political interests. In spite of international pressure on the Taliban by UNESCO, numerous (Islamic) countries and organisations to preserve the monumental Buddhas, the statues were destroyed in March 2001 (Harrison 2010b, 161). Ironically, the destruction has led to more attention for World Heritage as an institution and for its fragility in conflict situations and global terrorism (*op. cit.*, 168). The many ways to describe heritage, to perceive heritage and by whom, the ways for heritage to be (miss)used and to end up in all kinds of conflict situations, all sum up the complicated nature heritage seems to incorporate.

The Waikato River

The case study involves the Waikato river on the North Island of New-Zealand (Fig.2), meandering its course from the volcanic regions of Tongariro National Park through Lake Taupo to the Tasman Sea on the western coast (Fig. 3). As the longest river in New-Zealand it flows through many Maori tribal territories (Fig. 4)

Fig. 3. Waikato River catchment (From:www.waikatoriver.org.nz/cathment).

with its name meaning "flowing water" in the Maori language. As the first settlers arriving between 1250 and 1300 A.D., the Maori are considered the indigenous inhabitants of New-Zealand with European colonists arriving in larger numbers after James Cook explored and mapped the coastline at the end of the 18th century. In 1840 a British representative was asked to claim sovereignty over New-Zealand and negotiated a treaty with the Maori tribes over land allocations. That same year the Treaty of Waitangi was signed between the government and Maori tribes which in the decades to follow has led to wars and finally the confiscation of Maori land. The Treaty proved invalid as the legal instrument to back Maori claims over land: the Chief Judge declared its content legally invalid (Van Meijl 2015, 225) setting the tone for European supremacy over Maori tribes for the next 130 years. Among the confiscated land is the entire territory of the Waikato tribes (*op. cit.*, 224).

It is not until 1985 that the Maori claims are put for a tribunal to be assessed for their legitimacy as a result of heightened public awareness of indigenous rights advocated by civil right movement which sprouted in the 1960's. Ten years later 3% of formerly confiscated land is returned to Maori tribes, however, the river was not included in that arrangement. Several reasons are put forward for this. In Maori mythology, river and land are made in different manners which have made them separate entities in negotiations over territory. At the same time the government claimed ownership over "navigable rivers" (Van Meijl 2015, 228) which the Maori contested, stating that in accordance with the Waitangi Treaty those rights had never left Maori hands.

Since the beginning of the 20th cetury the New-Zealand government has exploited the Waikato River by building dams (Fig. 5), hydro power plants and farms along its course, causing sewage and polluted water discharges to negatively affect river water conditions. It is clear that the river is seen as a commodity and an economic resource by the New-Zealand government. In contrast, the Maori people see and treat the river is as an ancestor. The river is part of an ancestral landscape which needs to be carefully maintained out of respect for their

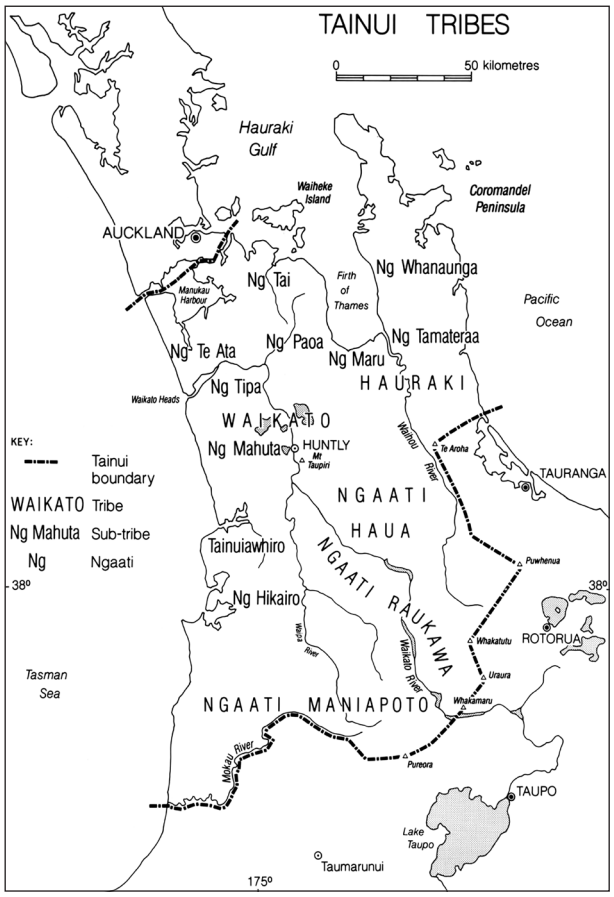

Fig. 4. Maori tribes in the Waikato catchment area (From: Van Meijl 2015, fig. 1).

predecessors (Kawharu 2009, 317; Van Meijl 2015, 220). Discharging sewage or other waste into the river is a cultural affront and an abuse of the river in Maori beliefs. The river is also seen as a common resource, imbued with indigenous beliefs, mythology and is used for Maori customary practices like fishing and transport (Van Meijl 2015, 236-237).

In 2010 the need for a communal approach of river management was required and this approach was formally stated in the Waikato River Agreement, with the well-being of the river at its core. However, two years later the government announced the sale of shares in power plants to third parties in order to obtain cash money to reduce New-Zealand's national debt. The euphoria of a good working relationship between national government and Maori is hereby shattered as Maori tribes were not asked for consent and were not offered any compensation. The government assured them their rights of use of the river, even when ownership rights of parts of the river were to be sold to a third party. In Maori conception there is no difference between rights of use and rights of ownership. However, with a European based legal system applied in New-Zealand, in the course of time the Maori were forced to re-articulate their proprietary interests in the river (*op. cit.*, 235). The dispute has gone to court

Fig. 5. Okahuri dam (From: www.wn.com).

but has not been settled yet. At the core of the dispute is a different, inconsistent and confusing conceptualization of water and its possible alienability, by both government and Maori tribes. This discrepancy can be explained through their difference in background, European and indigenous, which has led to a distinction in perception of the landscape and thus the river (*op. cit.*, 236). The concept of heritage is not mentioned once by Van Meijl and the river has not been made an official heritage site by the HNZPC. However a strong interest in ancestral landscapes being part of the heritage of New-Zealand is strongly advocated by the Maori community (Kawharu 2009, 319). As mentioned above, this resulted in the fifth "C" being added to the UNESCO guidelines and of a greater awareness of ancestral landscapes being a type of cultural landscapes worth including on the list of world heritage. Kawharu concludes that the indigenous perception of landscape with the "fluidity between values such as tangible-intangible and sacred and profane" can lead to an appreciation of these values, and for these landscapes to be truly seen as "outstanding" by the World Heritage Convention (*op. cit.*, 335).

Synthesis

The Waikato River case study provides a conflict situation between national authorities and indigenous Maori tribes over a river landscape (Fig. 6) of which both parties felt entitled to have a claim over. Whether based on legal rights addressed to in several laws made in the last 180 odd years on a European template, or based on an obligation to ancestors and themselves to look after the well-being of the river and thus the well-being of themselves, the government and Maori tribes acted in their own best interests. A conflict of which the foundations may have been laid in a colonial past, of indigenous rights being neglected or overruled. A conflict of two worlds in which concepts like ownership, alienability, rights of use and

Fig. 6. Waikato River (From: www.themissingyear.com).

commodity are almost non-existent or are applied in different ways. With the aid of the concepts of perception and heritage, an attempt was made to analyse the underlying aspects of the conflict in this paper.

The inherent perception seems to correspond to the Maori belief of an ancestral and mythological landscape of which they are a part as much as the landscape is a part of them. One cannot own the landscape as one is the landscape and the landscape cannot be alienated as one cannot alienate oneself. The explicit perception of the river seems to reflect the perception of the New-Zealand government of the river as a commodity to be exploited and sold. The river landscape seems subsidiary to monetary profits of national importance. In spite of a great willingness to right the wrongs from the past, the difference in perception of not only the river as a landscape, but also of the rights of ownership and use, seem to continue to drive a wedge between government and Maori tribes. A difference in opinion about the heritage status of the river does not seem to be very relevant at first: the lack of mentioning heritage as playing a part in the conflict by Van Meijl may be indicative for this, as well as the river landscape not being listed as official heritage by the HNZPC. However, as has been pointed out, several types of heritage can be identified and disagreements over heritage issues can lead to conflict and destruction. In this line of thought, the 'bottom-up' approach to heritage seems applicable to the Maori stance towards the Waikato River whereas the 'top-down' approach from the state seems non-existent as the river is not officially recognised as heritage.

Analogous to explicit and inherent perception I want to introduce the term explicit heritage for a nation's official heritage or sites designated World Heritage by UNESCO. Subsequently, inherent heritage is applicable to any material or immaterial aspect of life people find worth preserving regardless of being official heritage. Within this scope fall the ancestral landscapes like the Waikato River, a landscape vital to the identity and mythology of the tribes depending on it (Kawharu 2009, 320). The same author pleads for

"ancestral landscapes" to be recognised by UNESCO as a distinctive type of landscape and as world heritage (*op. cit*., 317). I am not advocating to recognise inherent heritage to be made explicit in order to receive protection or funding from authorities. However, the acknowledgement by authorities, at any level, of the sensitivities regarding indigenous interests in landscapes as a whole, may avoid future conflicts. The need for recognition of indigenous values and perception in landscape heritage management has been shown throughout this paper. Our ability to understand concepts of landscape very unlike our own may be tested however, as a consequence, it can also raise our acceptance of indigenous approaches to the landscape. A precedent for a new approach seems to have been set quite recently when, again, in New-Zealand the Whanganui River was given a legal status: tribes of the river area have an inalienable connection with the river and are responsible for its health and well-being.[5] The river is seen as a legal person with the purpose to be treated as heritage. Time will tell if this dual protection (heritage and a legal status in order for a person to act on behalf of the river) is the solution to conflicts arising from different perceptions of a landscape.

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5 Paraphrasing the Whanganui River Claims Settlement Bill. www.legislation.govt.nz/bill/government/2016/0129/latest/DLM6831459.

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